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JENNY BELL.

A Story.

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," "THE LIFE OF STERNE," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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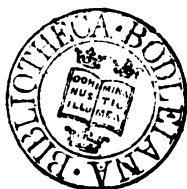
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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JENNY BELL.

BOOK THE FIRST.

(CONTINUED.)

PENWILLION.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

ROUT.

JENNY was known to be very ill. A local doctor attended her. Scaling the cliffs, she had got a fall and hurt herself. When this was reported to Mrs. Tollemache, that lady remarked, with her usual coarseness, "Got a fall, indeed! Likely enough!" and snorted, "Up the rocks! Just so; nice sight she'd have been, sprawling over the rocks—ugh! She should be laid on the ground and well trounced. *That*'d cure her!" These uncharitable sentiments, however, did not gain weight. There was rather a popular sentiment

in Jenny's favour. She was indeed suffering cruelly.

Something of the true cause had "got out," mainly, it must be said, owing to young Swinton's demeanour. His self-reproaches and anxieties were written in his face. He was always hanging about the corridor where Jenny's room was, and once had actually spoken to her through the door. That stolen, almost *guilty* interview, was the sweetest of all. Abundant letters, too, passed between them, in which allusion was often made to that meeting. An extract from one of the youth's letters will show his state about this time :

"I cannot describe to you what I suffer. Tell me, dearest Miss Jenny" (he now reached to this pleasant compromise between "Miss Bell" and too familiar "Jenny"), "that you are getting better, and well and strong again. I never can enough reproach myself for my stupidity. And now I conjure and *implore you to think over* some way by which you will let me make you amends. *I have thought of many, but I dare not*

mention them, *for fear you would be angry with me.* Surely you know that I am your friend, and I like you, I do, indeed, much more than any one else—after my own family.” This was something of an untruth in the infatuated boy; for really at that moment he did prefer his flame to any one member of his family. “And now you must promise me that you will think of something, or I myself shall try and do something foolish for you that you would not like. *I want to help you, and I have a right, now.* And if you would let me, you would make me *so happy.*”

If Lady Harriet, already calmly designing her boy for Miss Lancaster, or for Frogmore’s second, the little Honourable Julia Croker, and thinking that she had years before her to balance their claims and weight, were looking over her shoulder at these follies! But, as was well known, she was down at Cannes with a weak chest, where, too, the submissive Swinton, her husband, had to wait on her, far away from the Yorkshire which he loved, and the fine York-

shire horses on which he used to hunt in the winter. Jenny, getting over the "shock," often thought with awe of this woman, of whom she had made a photograph for herself.

After about five days' interval Jenny came down, looking delicate enough, amid the sarcastic sympathy of her sex. The youth, whom the delay and suspense had driven into excessive agitation, had begun to be careless about public opinion, and displayed his delight and admiration without restraint. He flew up to her—he would have kissed her feet, like Man Friday, and put one of them reverently on his head, if he could have seen that such a step would have pleased her in the least. He worshipped her.

"I have been so miserable and wretched," he said, "ever since. I feel like a criminal who has done a great crime. How shall I make it up to you. Name any way—*any* way," said he, infatuated.

"I have suffered a good deal," said Jenny, gently; "but it was not *your* fault. Indeed no."

Amused looks from the men, and sniffs

and open scorn from the ladies, saluted these outpourings of the lovers. Jenny felt this by a sort of instinct, and rose to go out for an easy walk. The young lover followed her promptly. They wandered away down the shore.

What took place between our lovers during that stroll? When one feels himself under a load of obligation, and is panting to be allowed to return it, and presses and presses again, what can a maiden do to meet such importunity? She may call him a "poor boy," and a generous noble fellow, and at last have it wrung from her that she *does* care for him—she dare not trust herself to say how much. At last does Jenny promise. If any unforeseen difficulty *should*—well, she will—there. And there is her hand—her round, full, well-modelled hand. No one is by, and our ecstatic youth, having got that hand into his possession—well, there was no one by to see.

That night he was standing radiant on the hotel steps, when Mr. Rigby came to him, touching him humorously in the side. "Well, Swinton," he said, "nice goings

on! Ah, you sly young fellow! What d'ye mean, sir?"

The other coloured, and yet smiled. "How do you mean?" he asked.

"Ah, don't tell me. Why, we shall be coming for lessons to you—you must tell us the secret. How did you manage it? Cut them all out, eh?"

"Nonsense," said the other, with good-humoured impatience.

"But sense, I say," answered his friend. "Surely we all know it. Everybody says it. Why, don't you know yourself? There was Bowyer would have put his eyes upon sticks to have got on so far as you."

It was impossible to resist encouragement like this, and so presently the two became confidential. The youth wanted sympathy; and his heart at that moment was very full of joy and triumph.

"Of course," he said, after a long pause, "the idea of marriage would be premature now. One would have to meditate seriously before taking any such step. And I do not conceal from myself, Rigby, that there would be great difficulties to be

overcome. My mother would, of course—and *naturally*, Rigby, I do not blame her—have her objections. In fact, I do not see my way, and have hardly thought of seeing my way. But I will say this, Rigby,” and the youth’s voice, trembling as he spoke, put a pause between each word—“that no man could wish for a more high-minded, noble-hearted girl than that Jenny Bell. Every hour that I see more of her utter unselfishness, Rigby, I am amazed! They are settling, I know, for me, this woman and that girl with money and with titles. I declare to Heaven I would sooner have a woman like that and happiness, than all their money and titles.”

“To be sure,” said the other; “but you are quite wise to wait a little, and look about you, you know, as you said yourself.”

“Oh, that of course,” said the boy, confidently. “Give me a light, will you?”

“The only thing is,” said the other, “about the age, isn’t there, now?”

“I knew you’d come to that,” said the other, with a pitying smile. “Disparity is the word, isn’t it? Why, that is the merit

of the thing, the *sense*, the guarantee of the whole thing. Why, any foolish boy can pick up a school-girl without brains or sense, but one ripe and matured like Jenny, you know——”

“Oh, I see,” said Rigby, gravely. “To be sure.”

“Oh, and if I could tell you the things she has done,” the youth went on, enthusiastically. “Now, you know, that day when she fell and hurt herself—that is, was *supposed* to have fallen and hurt herself——” And not able to contain himself, young Swinton told his friend the whole of that story.

Before going to bed that night, Mr. Rigby went to his desk, wrote a long letter that began “My dear Lady Harriet,” and said to himself, as he sealed it, “What inconceivable donkeys these boys would make of themselves if they were not well looked after.”

More days went by and more evenings as delicious for the lovers as the last. During their walks, the youth had told his Jenny everything about his family. How he would be able to do as he liked when “he got of age,” and “was his own master.”

That the "bulk of the property" had been left by a rich and distant relation, quite independent of father and mother. That it was to be all his before long. "My mother," he said, confidentially but uneasily, "is a woman of very strong mind, and if she gets excited, is very hard to deal with. I remember some dreadful scenes with papa; but that was at first, and he always does what she wants now." A good deal more to this effect did he impart to Jenny. "I have lots of money," he said, "and shall have lots more."

He now told Jenny of a little scheme he had. There was a creek about three miles away, which had been established as a suitable spot for pic-nics, and he had determined, "now that the weather was fine," to give a little feast here to a few ladies and gentlemen. The whole was, indeed, to do homage to Jenny, and raise her in public opinion. And though the youth's penchant was pretty well known, still his prospects were also so well known, that it was likely that every young person he asked would be happy to go with him. It was to be a sailing party, and the Salt being "spoken with,"

had closed his mahogany eyelids, and with pliant flattery had remarked: "Ah, Muster Swinton, when we get her aboard again, she'll founder. Leave it to me, muster. I'll get up the mainsel, never fear, and maybe we won't let the boom go *this* time." He then undertook to provide suitable crafts—fast sailing and "roomy," so as to give facilities to each gentleman to "carry on" beside his own "Sally."

Mrs. Long of Eaton had consented to come, in an amused way; and Mr. Rigby, consulted, almost anxiously, by young Swinton; and some other ladies. "You see," said the youth, "they have been so kind to me; it looks scurvy not making some return, you know. A fellow mustn't always take and never give." To which Mr. Rigby heartily assented. (No answer had come to his letter as yet.)

Young Swinton had hinted to Jenny what plans he had in his head. "It's shameful," he said, "an infernal shame, the way these women behave. They want taking down a bit. They think nobody half good enough for 'em. I confess to you—you'll see to-

morrow—*something*, you know. When I take a plan into my head, I carry it out. I say no more. I'll give these ladies of quality a little lesson, and teach 'em to know their place. Just keep your eye on Mrs. Long to-morrow—that's all."

Jenny deprecated this. "You will only make yourself enemies, my dear child," she said; "and all for me! No, no."

"That's just what I want," said he, with a smile; "to make your enemies mine. Nothing I should like better. I'll teach 'em. Just keep your eye on Mrs. Long to-morrow."

Jenny rewarded him with a smile of affection. All that evening he was busy with his stores and preparations. The Salt, consulted that evening, and holding his mahogany face to the sky, said confidently it would be what he called "a day and a harf," that is, if *he* knew what a day was!

At seven the great omnibus, with the new arrivals, came in; ladies and gentlemen looking from the windows of this moving gaol, half timorously, half surprised. Jenny was in her room, and from her window saw them

come, and was a little amused at the helpless air with which they were "taken out," and put away in the hall of the hotel. There was to be dinner or tea for these late arrivals. Meantime, the sun had gone down, and the now dull sea glistened tranquilly about the great hotel, and the sailors on the beach growing indistinct as to features, moved about the beach, and prophesied a "great day" to-morrow.

Jenny was thinking it was about time to smooth her hair and to go down and irritate the ladies of the drawing-room by her innocent helpless demeanour—a favourite pastime of hers—when a knock was heard at her door. Would she see one of the ladies down stairs in No. 90, for a moment? See one of the ladies. Who? Mrs. Long, perhaps, wishing to expiate, in sackcloth and humiliation, her insolent behaviour? Mrs. Tollemache? Who could tell? Jenny *was* going down; so she could call at No. 90, on her way.

A voice strange to her said, "Come in." It must have been a mistake; for there *was* a tall manly lady, with a stern brow and

cold lips, and half grey wiry hair, sitting very high, and stiff, and straight. Jenny shrank back.

"I beg pardon," she said.

"Don't go," said the lady; "your name is Bell, is it not? Mine is Lady Harriet Swinton."

Jenny started. In a second she saw the whole situation. More plots, more persecutions. In a second, too, she saw that her *natural* helplessness, and piteousness, and appealing looks, on which she relied so much in her difficulties, would be of no profit here. Rather, could not *be* here. The stern lady of quality before her could not see such things in her. Jenny drew herself up calmly.

"I *am* Miss Bell," she said, firmly.

"Yes," said the other, "the Miss Bell that I have been hearing of. That has been—no matter. I shall come to the point at once, without any soft speeches. I have travelled many hundred miles for this. Now, then, what is all this you have been doing with—with my son?"

Jenny had been thinking all this time, and

a hundred plans had flitted across her brain. Yet something whispered to her that it was all hopeless, or next to hopeless.

"I ask, what have you been doing to my son?"

Jenny saw some faint outlines of a course to be taken.

"What have I been doing?" she said.

"What a strange question! He has been kind to me—oh, so good! and I have been grateful in a little way—that is——"

"You call *that* gratitude?" said the other, "fastening on a poor weak child just out of school, trying to ruin him for life. *You*, three times his age, below him in station! Is that what you call your gratitude—trying to entrap a boy of consequence? Answer me."

"I don't understand your language, madam," said Jenny, flushing a little at these compliments. "You, of course, being a great lady, think you can speak to me as you please."

"We must have done with this tone," said the lady, angrily. "I am not here to engage

in any discussion with you, but to snatch my poor boy from your power, such as it is."

"You are his mother," said Jenny, calmly, "and I can make allowance ; as for snatching him from me, as you call it, you will *not* do that. I may be humble, but I am an Englishwoman, born and bred. Your equal in the sight of the constitution, before which, great ladies and humbler ladies are all equal—perfectly equal. Let me tell you *that!* I have his promise, which he has nobly given me, and which he will fulfil, when he comes of age, when he will be independent of everybody; and the law will see that I get my rights."

"Indeed it will," said the other. "But I told you I want no discussion or speeches on this matter. Let me ask you, do you know how this boy stands? I ought, indeed, to refer you to our solicitor; and, indeed, God knows why I trouble myself about the business, only it will shorten the matter. Do you know—I ask you a simple business-like question—how he stands as to his affairs?"

Jenny answered scornfully, "Of course I am set down as a fortune-hunter and adventuress."

"Do you know," went on the other lady, "that his estate is under the Court? Of course you will think that what I say is not true, but you can ascertain it for yourself. Do you know that the relation who left him all this money, has placed him, as regards its disposal, under the control of that Court? And since you know *so much of the law*, I need not tell you what it is to meddle in this way with a person in his position."

Jenny winced a little. "I have done nothing but what is right," she said; "I am not afraid."

"That's another question," answered Lady Harriet, promptly. "I give you my honour, as a lady, what I state is true. Look at these papers if you like—keep them until to-morrow. I want to take no advantage of you. But I tell you that, at this moment, you are in a serious position. 'Contempt,' as your knowledge of law will tell you, is a very serious business."

There was a conviction in all this, and

an air of truth, which came home at once to Jenny. She did not answer. "We leave this to-morrow," went on Lady Harriet, "and I take my son with me."

"You seem to be quite certain of your plans, madam," said Jenny, with a smile that seemed spiteful. "But I think he has other arrangements for the morning."

"I take him with me," said Lady Harriet. "I think you hardly know his character as yet. He is a little of a coward, and wants resolution. I have always been able to do just as I like with him. I shall take him away early in the morning——"

"Grant that," said Jenny, "for the sake of argument."

"—down to our place. He is fickle, changeable as the wind. If you depend on *his* constancy, you have a broken reed to go upon. In a month you will be out of his head."

"Broken reed!" said Jenny, to whom this tone of assurance was very galling. "I have something more than a broken reed to rest on."

"Ah! a written promise," said the other,

quickly. "I know it. Take care, you are on dangerous ground. We have a very clever lawyer in our family. But these are mere idle words, and lead to nothing. Listen to me, once more, Miss Bell."

"I shall listen to nothing," said Jenny, angrily. "I shall go on my rights. Why did your son attach himself to me? I did not ask him, or seek him. What has he meant by his behaviour during these few weeks? Ask the whole hotel. *They* will tell you what his conduct has been. What if there is a disparity? I am a lady by birth, and not to be treated like one of your common creatures, who can be got rid of by lawyers. This is not the tone to address me in, Lady Harriet Swinton. Your son is in the army, old enough to have a commission, and old enough to be responsible morally, without having recourse to shabby legal quibbles."

This was a reasonable, though warm, protest on Jenny's part. It seemed—given as it was with animation and candour—to come with surprise on her antagonist. That lady met her in the same candid spirit.

“What you say is fair enough,” said she. “He is a child and a fool, and I fear not as strict as he should be. He will get into trouble if he goes on in this way. Your case is a hard one, and brings inconveniences. Look here, now: we are two women of the world, here in this room together. Let us accommodate the thing. Only fools drive matters to extremities and ventilate their disputes. You *have* been treated badly, and have cause of complaint. Here, take these letters and papers—look over them. You will see what I have said is true, and that it is impossible to prosecute the thing. Take them to your room, think the matter over, sleep upon it, and then let me know in the morning. And *any form of reasonable and handsome reparation* to which you think you are entitled, we shall be delighted to make. You see I meet you *as one lady may meet another*, and without lawyers. If I spoke warmly at the beginning of our interview, and without the respect due from one lady to another, you must excuse it. Recollect, where our sons are concerned we have a little of the wild animal.”

This was such a rational view, accompanied by such a handsome *amende*, that our Jenny would have been ill brèd not to meet it half way. She took the papers mechanically, and said: "In the morning, Lady Harriet?"

"Yes; we go at ten. And," added she, "should you have thought over the matter favourably, you might send me, with these papers, any papers of your *own that refer to the matter*. I am sure you will do everything for the best, Miss Bell. We should be glad to be of use to you hereafter. I have always found that *la nuit porte conseil*."

Jenny went away slowly to her room. She thought the matter over very carefully. In an hour she wrote a note to Lady Harriet Swinton, enclosing her back the papers, and a fresh paper. She said she was glad to have the opportunity of gratifying her ladyship.

Her ladyship wrote promptly in reply, and in her ladyship's envelope was put up a slip of cloudy pearl-coloured paper—half printed and half written.

At ten the following morning the omnibus was at the door to take departing guests to the first day train. It was known that the boating party was given up, owing to this sudden departure. Lady Harriet and her son, who was gloomy, and sulky, and miserable-looking, with red eyes, were put in. It might have been a police-van going to the prison. Lady Harriet had, indeed, the air of having her son in custody.

The whole was an incident in the hotel life. Every one could guess at the real truth of the business. It was, in fact, as they knew, a rescue. Mrs. Long enjoyed it immensely. Mrs. Tollemache was indecently jubilant. The woman would be exposed, she knew perfectly. Had she not always said so. If they could just take her and have her hair cut off, and she had six months in a proper asylum, it would do her a world of good.

Indeed, it is obvious that the situation would be almost painful for Jenny. No one with nice feelings could endure to be the mark of those women's scorn, and these, we must bear in mind, were the excellent

matrons who austerey marshalled their Fannys and Julias every Sunday to the pews, under Doctor Fireirons, and snoozed into a sense of the unspeakable beauty of Charity, and gentle judgment of our neighbours' failings. Good and excellent ladies, no doubt, but with no more mercy for a creature like Jenny, who had the misfortune to be single, gracious, attractive, and who was, besides, alone in the world, than they would have had for a Malay running a muck.

That evening there was another departure. She paid her bill munificently, distributed largesse to all the menials, and was put into the omnibus with her modest *appareil*, attended by blessings. The air was charged with "God-speeds!" purchased so surprisingly easily. They are a grateful race. The guests were all scattered abroad, on the strand or on the hills, and it was only at dinner that it became known that she was no longer among them. The official intimation was a sort of shout from Mrs. Tolle-mache, which reached down nearly to the end of the table:

“ *What* is it ? What-d’ye say ? The woman Bell gone ? God be praised for all his mercies ! I knew we should get rid of her ! The place seems clean and decent now ! Never mind, my ‘dear.’ I’ll watch the police news every day ! Ha ! ha ! ”

BOOK THE SECOND.

S P A B A D.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

A NEW ARRIVAL.

WHEN the tourist bound for the watering-places, has left Liège and the greater towns well behind him, he finds himself rushing through a charming green country, which seems to absorb him and his train more and more every moment. He sees the mountains gathering about him, and valleys opening in front. But when at last he draws up by the sort of Swiss cottage which is called a station, and finds himself in the heart, as it were, of a leafy glen, with hills covered with luxuriant leaves rising

around him, and another pastoral train on pastoral principles, and little airy saloons on the tops of the carriages, to be made out waiting behind the trees, with no rude glaring signal-posts or switches to take off the effect, he begins to rub his eyes, and to think whether he has not got back to the mythology, and whether this is not a heathen railway, made by the fairies for the convenience of the wood-nymphs and the rustic gods.

At this little station was the junction. Here the Sybarites and pure pleasers were set down, as it were at the coulisses of the stage; for indeed the prospect of green groves, and the flowers, and the walks, gave a general air as of a scene in an opera. The great heavy train, with its business folk and the *regular* travellers, was to journey on, into the regions of prose and hard fact. Grave and sober faces looked out wistfully from many windows at the flock of happy beings, the bright girls in bright dresses and hats, and the good-humoured parents and guardians who clustered about the piles of almost gaudy luggage which was heaped upon the ground.

This was the holiday luggage. Then came a final shriek—signal of departure for practical minds, and the heavy business-like carriages rolled on into life ; the business heads still looking back, long and wistfully, at the airy happy groups gathered at the rustic station, on the verge of the pastoral kingdom.

Presently the light train with the open summer-houses on its top, began to move, plunging into the heart of the grove. Now it flew along a rustic path by the roadside where the peasants were ; now it took sweeps round leafy corners ; now it went slowly up a hill ; now plunged into a delightful glen, where the thick trees rustled musically against the roofs of the carriages ; now the brook ran alongside the path, and the glen grew yet thicker, and became all a pleasant shade ; and then the ladies in the carriages drew down the blinds, and then the trees opened, for here was the sun again. It was a truly pastoral railway and railway company, and at the little stations, which were like harbours, a green Robin Hood of a guard stood on the

steps and wound his bugle. None of all the faces looking from the windows of this pleasure-train were so filled with delight and wonder as those of the two little girls in hats, who sat with the sad, pensive looking, iron-grey gentleman, who was their father. They also were quiet, pensive girls. The elder, Miss Lucy, had taken off her hat—there was only another gentleman in the carriage with them—and her brown hair had fallen down all about her small face, which was glowing in the sun. They were both full of enthusiasm at the sylvan look of the glade through which they were flying. The second had her hands clasped with delight. They were thinking that this surely was the fairy land of railways. Their father, who had one of the Tauchnitz story-books in his hands, looked out now and again with a sort of feigned delight, all because they were delighted.

Lucy was standing up now. Besides that devotional look, there was in her eyes a glitter as of a film, and a liquid look, not the least of her attractions.

“It is charming,” she said, half to herself.

"How happy we shall be here! if it be all like this, dear papa."

The iron-grey man looked up from his Tauchnitz book. He glanced at each window. "It's like one of the beautiful Irish or Scotch glens," he said. "And the air seems so soft and delicious."

"You will find Spabad just as delightful," said the gentleman, who had been watching the enthusiasm of both girls. "I have been there often. It is full of enjoyments—the difficulty is, what to choose. You can ride, and drive in little carriages that seem drawn by dogs, and if you care for music and dancing, as of course you do——"

Both cast down their eyes with a blush, then glanced at their father secretly.

The gentleman, who had a square stiff face with a good-natured eye, and who had very long legs cased in check trousers, saw their confusion. "Every one can suit himself there," he went on; "you can be quiet, or as gay as you like. I know the place by heart; I have been there for the three years I have been home from India. Always put up at the one place, the Pays Bas."

Mr. Lepell closed his Tauchnitz with some interest. He looked at his daughters with affection. "I am so glad to hear all this," he said; "we shall have the ponies and the carriages every day."

"Oh, the young ladies will like it, depend upon it," said the gentleman, who had a faint Scotch accent. "It is *the* place, in fact, for young ladies. You meet them in flocks there, up on the walks, sitting under the trees, everywhere. I like to see them enjoy themselves. It is good for the eyes of a dried-up old Indian like me."

There was a geniality and freedom about him that attracted this family. He seemed to like talking on for them.

"My name is Tulloch," he said. "They sent me out when I was sixteen. So I have been through it all, pretty well, you will say. There were twelve of us started together—two Englishmen, one Irishman, and the rest from poor Old Reekie. I believe I and Tom Macgregor are the only two that have held on. This place has done me a world of good. For it is an awful country, India. With some, it's like living in a cru- .

cible. Here you are, young ladies," he said, pulling a black leather bag from under the seat. "Here are some story-books, and papers. Bought this in Brussels." And he drew out one of the gaudy Belgian show-books—black cloth dappled over with red and gold, and containing bad lithographs of all the cathedrals of Belgium. "There are all the show-places—very well done too, and a capital guide-book. Yesterday's *Times*, too. They're getting everything very fairly meethodised abroad."

He had presently strewn the inside of the carriage with his papers and books, over which the two girls began to look with some interest. Mr. Lepell had gone back dreamily to *his* book. There this good-natured Mr. Tulloch was sitting beside them, pointing out the pictures, and telling them stories about India. At last he called out, "Here we are!" as they drew up beside another rustic station, still, as it seemed, in a green glen, hemmed in by a wall of trees. A kind of pastoral omnibus was waiting, and several ladies and gentlemen, in the calm *négligé* dress of such

retreats, with a quiet air, too, of long residence, were looking listlessly out for new arrivals. It was the cool evening of a hot glowing day. There was an air of peaceful languor over all—as if this was some little sheltered corner partitioned off from the noisy world. Gentlemen in low-crowned hats with gay ribbons looked on tranquilly. Now a carriage came slowly in from a day's junketing, and passed by. It was the most rural, inviting spot in the world.

“What hotel?” said Mr. Tulloch to Mr. Lepell. “You couldn’t make a mistake in the Pays Bas. Gardens, greenhouses, and that sort of thing. Dine in a long glass lantern with the others—the coolest arrangement possible in this sort of weather. You see the trees as you eat and drink, and the breeze comes in.”

“Then let us go there, papa,” said the elder girl, eagerly.

At the Pays Bas they were just sitting down to dinner. It was a white house, with white doors and spacious rooms, a court-yard and garden, and that glass

lantern arrangement spoken of by Mr. Tulloch for dining. As the new travellers came in they looked down the long "thin" white room, with the long narrow table well fringed with guests—for the clatter had set in, and innumerable black waiter sprites were flitting about. Glass doors and white muslin ran all down one side, and some of the doors were open, showing the large court with the green shrubs planted round,—letting in, too, the sustained sound of falling waters. There was an inviting coolness and an air of repose over everything.

The guests—the English ladies in their hair and in bonnets—looked down curiously at the new arrivals, who were put at the bottom of the table, and measured the two interesting shy girls, and the grave-looking father who sat between them. Mr. Tulloch was at the other side of the table—quite at home.

"How do you Madame, Blum?" he said cheerfully to a lady in black, who was hostess. "You see, I have come back to you. You kept my old room for me? You

must take care of these young ladies too, for they have trusted to my recommendation."

Madame Blum bowed, as if this was a sort of introduction—then smiled on that long "M. Tulloke," whose, "*gaieté de cœur*" she always liked. Through the dinner he chattered good naturedly, and with an under-current of elderly gallantry. He was not more than fifty, and there was a good-natured twinkle in his eyes.

"These long limbs of mine," he said, as he apologised for their catching in the dress of one of the young girls. "I often wish I could roll them up, or, better still, have half a foot taken off." Then he looked up and down the table with a nod as he caught the eye of some one far off. "Very nearly the same set. They all come back regularly. Look," he said, "that tall thin gentleman, with the skull-looking head, and the rouged lady next to him, they are the great cards of the house—Lord Loveland——."

And the tall lord passed out through the glass door, with the false-coloured false-

haired lady, who was Lady Kanturk.—
‘On that signal the sound of scraping and shrieking chairs were heard, and soon, instead of guests, were seen only two long files of bottles and crumpled napkins.

Later they wandered out into the little town with Mr. Tulloch.

“Would you like me to go with you? Perhaps you would prefer exploring by yourself.” He had delicacy, this long elderly Indian, and was even shy and sensitive.

Oh no, they should be so much obliged, the two girls said together: for they had already begun to like his simplicity and good nature.

It was like a scene out of the theatre. The grey of the evening was well set in; it was cool, and delightfully calm and tranquil. Lights were twinkling in a few windows; but the gay colouring of the houses, which, with the green and yellow blinds, and low roofs and frequent balconies, rose at corners and angles, and were laid out in little short lengths of streets, and turned and twisted, was still visible. Above and around, on all sides, arose the great green hills and their thick fringing

of trees, now almost black. They walked on; there were a dozen waiters talking pleasantly in the centre of the little street, like a chorus in a play. Here two ladies in opera cloaks floated by, and no one looked after them. Now came a "Crack, crack!" and the large omnibus of the place, like a prison-van, came lumbering along, filling the width of the whole street, on a level with the drawing-rooms; wholly disproportionate to the place, and seeming likely to be jammed any moment between the two sides of the houses. Here, at this turn, was the Grecian pediment with the pillars, where the saving waters gushed out, and where the great Peter of Russia, who is one of the saints of the place, had drunk and been restored.

Then a sharp turn, and the little green-blind houses began to go down a steep hill. Here were men in blouses round a fountain, also like a chorus in a play; while there would drift past, softly, four gay Englishmen, in dress-coats and white ties, going to the ball.

To the new arrivals the whole was a

most romantic jumble of scenic effect and sweet pastoral seclusion — a tiny happy valley!

“Oh! what is this building?” Miss Lucy asked, mysteriously; for they were passing a solid massive pile, with seven or eight large windows, all wide open and a-blaze with yellow light, as if a furnace were inside.

“Those are the Rooms,” said Mr. Tulloch; “the wicked excitement of the place.”

“Oh! the gambling,” said the younger sister, in an awe-struck voice, and shrinking back.

“Oh, we may go in,” he said; “everybody does. There is no harm in a look.”

They glanced back at the gently ascending wall of green trees, the placid, innocent-looking houses, and the genial pastoral air. In one minute more there was a curious contrast: they had gone up the stairs, and were in the hot, glaring, glowing, brilliant rooms, where were the two green lamps hanging low in the middle, like diving bells, and the lazy crowd stooping over and looking down at something on the

table. There was the familiar click, click of the ball dancing into brass cells, the solemn chanting of the croupiers; then the sudden restlessness and motion of the black crowd, and the grand round of jingling moneys—paying out, raking up—which makes such a curious jumble of sounds. All this has been described over and over again, and most of us have experienced the mingled curiosity, horror, and reverence, of the first visit to this strange scene.

It was in this way the two English girls were affected. They hovered at the door as if under a spell; their little faces glowed with wonder and excitement; they longed to see the mystery that was going on at the tables to which men went as mystically, and from which they came away as mystically; sometimes exuberant, and looking at something in their hands. Then they looked with wonder to the quiet English mothers, with their young girls, who walked past them and all round, laughing and delighted, without being affected by these horrors. This mixture of tame English life with the

dramatic mysteries going on about them, left a curious and almost awful impression on their two young minds.

“Will you come over to the table?” he said; “will you trust me? There is no harm in it, and it is very curious to look at.”

They went with him. He got them near to the table, and then, over the shoulders of those who were sitting down, they saw the strange and almost fascinating scene that has been described so often, and painted nearly as often. They saw the glowing green table, and the heaps of gold, and silver that almost looked gold under the light, and the four calm croupiers, and the flying, dancing marble, and the eager faces—the old, the young, the fresh, the fair, the withered, the wrinkled, the painted, the ugly, the handsome faces. They saw all this with awe, but with the reverence that seems inseparable from this awe.

There seem to be patterns furnished out, as it were, to all these places. They saw the tall handsome girl in the hat and feathers, who always has her half-dozen silver pieces, and rests her chin on her hand,

and plays with great deliberation, and loses often. She is found at Baden, and at the whole round of such places. The young girls remarked her. Their eyes were travelling round the table, when the elder suddenly touched her sister and said :

“Helen, dear, look, look ! Is not that the old lady we saw at Penwillion ? And look ! Oh, Lucy ! there’s Miss Bell !”

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

A MEETING.

BOTH started. Just opposite was indeed the round mottled face of Mrs. Sandwich, who was sitting down, flourishing a rake, with her eager grey eyes ranging up and down the table. She had two heavy heaps of silver before her ; and behind her, standing up, was the figure of Jenny Bell, not in a meretricious hat but a pious bonnet, and her round face as fresh and coloured as if the air of that place was healthy, inspiriting, mountain morning air.

She, too, had seen them with a start, and had flown round to them, but with an air of secrecy and mystery.

"You here!" she said, with delight in her face. "This is a surprise, and such a comfort, too. I can only stay a second," she added, looking round mysteriously, "or I shall be missed."

"Missed! How?" said Lucy, wondering.

"Mrs. Sandwich," said Jenny, sadly; "I am with *her* now. Do you understand? No matter. And your papa—*Mr.* Lepell"—she added, as if to make clear the meaning of her first description. "Where is he?"

These were natural girls, full of pity always for the suffering and the sorrowing, and grateful to any one that was kind to them. They drew Miss Bell over to their father, who was sitting on the velvet sofa, and not so much affected by the novelty of the scene as they were.

"Here, papa," they said. "Look! A friend already."

He started—was really glad to see her—stood up, and shook her hand warmly.

"It is pleasant to meet a friend's face in this odd place. And what are you doing now?"

Jenny was looking furtively back to the

table. "Another time," she said, timidly; "in the morning I shall try and see you—the dear girls, I mean. Now I am on duty. I suppose," she said, with a sort of sad smile, to the girls, "you thought I was busy at that dreadful work?"

Mr. Lepell looked at her with sympathising eyes. "But," said he, "I don't see——Why do you stay here?"

"Why?" she said. "Well, I have not had time to tell you. That pleasant life at dear Penwillion could not go on for ever. Though I had my little troubles there. When you all went, I lost my friends and protectors, and then I lost one who was the only relation I had left—a dear friend. I saw you were wondering at *this*"—and she motioned to her dark silk dress. (But in truth they had not remarked it.) "And then it came to *this*"—and she looked over at Mrs. Sandwich—"to being on duty, as I call it—as you must let me call it. Ah! *they* understand."

Then she fled away frightened. Mr. Tulloch was standing close by, and looked with no little wonder after her.

“A very fresh and fair young lady. Like one of our Scotch lassies.”

“What did she mean by being on duty?” said Mr. Lepell, in a dreamy way.

“Oh, papa,” said the elder girl, eagerly, “did you not see?” Then she dropped her voice. “She is a *companion* to that lady.”

“A companion!” said Mr. Lepell, starting, and looking to the direction in which she had disappeared. “No, no; why, that is the most degraded of all situations. You are not serious, dears?”

“There is an interesting look about her,” said Mr. Tulloch, ruminatively. “What with the mourning and all, something attractive. Do you care to see more of this place, young ladies? The next room is the same thing over again. Cards instead of marbles. There: we can see the moon through the windows. A lovely night! Let us walk through the rooms.”

They went into two of the rooms where *rouge et noir* was at work, and noted the aristocratic stillness—the composed dignity which attended on this form of gaming. It

seemed as though pure gentlemen were playing here. Thus they passed out softly on to the lobby.

"It is a curious thing," said Mr. Tulloch, "and it grows on one. I won twenty napoleons on one night, but lost them all, and twenty to the back of them, a week after."

They went down-stairs. Two gentlemen were tramping up, talking loudly. As they passed, the elder girl pressed her sister's arm, and said, "Oh, Helen." It was some one she knew and recollected. The latter gentleman, with free black eyes, recollected her also, and said something to his friend.

"Helen, dear," she said, "don't you remember—at Penwillion?"

Colonel Bowyer looked after them over the banisters.

"That is the little pair we saw at the Welsh place. Virtuous posies," he said, contemptuously.

"The same rôles," said his friend; "we are turning up all our old faces."

"Nice pretty little bits of insipidity," said the colonel. "Come, what's going on to-

night? I must knock some of my money out of these rascals."

These two went in. The others went down out into the cool air. They left the hot glow of a raging furnace behind, which seemed to come out of the flaming windows like a blast.

The little green dell was now all twinkling with lights. It was quite tranquil. Close by them, under a cluster of trees which were in the little street, a few were sitting lazily, and languidly smoking and sipping a cup of coffee. Down the little files of trees, planted with regularity, and leading up into that great mass of trees on the hills, a few stragglers came lounging home. They passed by like shadows, and the silvery laugh of young girls in high spirits rang out. They stood near the door of the gaming-house, looking on at this pretty scene.

Every now and again some one came out of the great arch they were standing near, and passed them by. Sometimes it was a figure that came past slowly—smiling to itself, and stopping to look at something

in its hand. Then in another moment some one would hurry by them with a stamp and an audible malediction.

"Poor soul!" Mr. Tulloch said. "We know what has happened to *him*. But he'll be back to-morrow morning and will do better."

They were quite in the shadow, and no one could well see them, or at least their faces. Two more figures came out and stopped under the lamps of the arch. They were ladies, and the first turned sharp round on the second.

"Oh, papa," whispered one of the girls; "Mrs. Sandwich!"

"A set of swindlers," they heard Mrs. Sandwich say, "that should be exposed. They ought to be packed into gaol. And where were you? What made you go away? Why weren't you behind me? But I had twenty of those pieces down, and I'll swear some of those wretched swindlers took advantage of my bad sight. You should have looked after them."

Miss Bell began to answer her composedly, and looking up and down the

street. "I did not go away," she said; "you quite mistake; and you have been unlucky, and you wish to——"

Suddenly her voice changed into tones of surprising sweetness and suffering. It seemed to those who listened that she had no heart or strength to resist.

"Mrs. Sandwich," she said, mournfully, "can *I* help it? *Indeed* I cannot. But of course it is right that you should have some one to bear these vexations for you. It is part of my office. I am not entitled——"

"Pish! Rubbish!" they heard the red-faced lady say, as she walked away. "Don't worry me now with your airs. I'm not in the humour;" and the two figures faded out into the darkness.

"Oh, papa," said Miss Lucy, almost agitated, "you heard all that! Poor, poor Miss Bell."

"I did, indeed," he said, sadly. "Talk of a governess! It is dreadful to think of that poor girl being under such a tyranny."

"And such a terrible old lady," said Mr. Tulloch, "as well as I made her out in the dark. If she had that rake we saw in her

hand, at home, it wouldn't be far off that poor girl's head!"

"We might have been here months," said Mr. Lepell, sadly (they were now walking home slowly), "without even suspecting this. I suspect she is of a character that would suffer everything in secret."

"Papa," said the second girl, "I am sure she would sooner die than let us know. So—I think—we must not seem to have heard."

Mr. Lepell was walking with their arms resting on each one of his. He pressed his daughters' affectionately. "Very thoughtful," he said. "They talk of slaves in Africa; but surely in our English houses there must be numbers of poor girls in this way, and suffering dreadful persecution. It is very sad to think of—very. And there can be no remedy—none in the world."

"Oh, interference," said Mr. Tulloch, "would only make matters worse. But now, do you know what struck me? That the old woman was not so bad—only a little testy after her losses, which is natural, you know—and that the *girl* had rather the best of it."

Mr. Lepell shook his head and smiled. "Lucy and Helen know her," he said; "I believe hers is an unfortunate history, poor girl. My dears, you manage these things better than we can do. So will you be a little kind to her, and try to make it up to her in some way?"

"Oh, papa!" they said, gratefully, together, as if he had done them some favour.

They were now at the gate of their hotel. The gaming colony would soon be at rest. The gaming-room would soon be emptying its tenants through its archway as through the mouth of a sluice. They were presently in their rooms, tired after the day's travel—white and snowy rooms, almost the best the hostess of the Pays Bas could give them.

On waking up the next day, and looking from their windows, they had all the delight and surprise of finding a gay and picturesque place about them. It had been raining a little during the night, so that all the unbounded slopes of trees and the greenery seemed to look fresh and glistening after their bath; like many of the true

British youths scattered through the hotels, who brought about with them, at great inconvenience, inflexible tin tubs and more manageable Indian-rubber baths.

Looking out on the little hilly street, the two girls saw many of these young English, who had done with this healthful process, already afoot, and in bright grey coats, setting out cheerfully on their morning's walk.

They were down themselves presently—out in the open air, looking with delight on the little toy town, and uncertain where they were going. The sound of music led them on. It was no more than seven o'clock, and at the first turn they came upon the Grecian portico, where the famous Peter had drunk the iron water, where now there was splashing on the flags, and a surprising crowd passing to and fro from under the pillars—every one with a tumbler in his hand, and every one hurrying away as if he had an appointment, and feared to be late. Down the long walk, between the files of low trees, the crowd scattered, and walked for a wager back

and forwards, swinging their parti-coloured glasses. The two girls looked on wondering, yet timorously. This gallery of the world, in that little theatrical corner, came on them like a surprise. They heard a cheerful Scotch voice beside them.

Mr. Tulloch's; but Mr. Tulloch in his watering-place uniform, grey felt hat, grey coat, check trousers, and stick.

"Out early," he said, "and after all that travelling! This promises very well. Have you tasted the waters? No! Better begin. Here, Rose, two tumblers. Now!" And he handed them through the crowd in a moment, up to the wet splashed counter where Rose was stooping and drawing water.

"Ah, you make faces," he went on, laughing, "dreadful stuff, at first; but you will come to like it. Look at all the people. Look round at the place, and the grand names. Down there is the Promenade de Cinq Heures. It's only a walk like any other. There's the orchestra in the pagoda, under Bendeker—that's their weak point here—administration stingy."

Many people, posting by swinging their glasses, eager to work the iron-water they had just swallowed into their systems, and not ashamed to let it be known that they were so engaged, were struck by those two fresh, shrinking, but most interesting girls, and guessed perfectly that they were arrivals of the night before. The elderly mamma, in the white shawl and straw hat, but as juvenile as her two daughters, and who, with them, was trudging about, with the same openly-proclaimed views as to the iron-waters, noted them at once.

“What hotel is that pair at, dears? I didn’t see them at the table d’hôte. Who can they be with?”

“There he goes,” said Mr. Tulloch; “Bendeker is the leader—a good man, they tell me, in his way; and a civil, gallant fellow, too; for when any agreeable and musical young ladies come to him, he will play anything they ask him. Look here. That true swell—Lord Loveland—comes every year. How do you do, my lord?”

“Hah! Tulloch,” said his lordship, who

had on his regular grey uniform, with a black felt hat, and carried his hand inside his waistcoat, as if about to sit for his bronze statue; "Mr. Tulloch! Come back again?"

This indeed appeared to be the case, but, from a lord, it came like a deep and original remark.

"Last night, I suppose?"

"Only last night," said the other. "Lady Loveland quite well?"

"Quite, quite," said his lordship. "They have got me at the Pays Bas—good souls, you know. Up-on my soul I couldn't have the heart to leave 'em. Llanroost, you know, goes in state, and does the fine thing at the Nassau. They have the king and the princes there, you know, and I suppose that is what draws 'em. They make us comfortable at the Pays Bas, and I don't want more."

"A selfish old patrician," said Mr. Tulloch, as the lord took his hand out of the bronze attitude and walked on.

Every now and again came a light rattle,

and turning, they saw a little carriage of the place, drawn by a smart pony, and driven by a little girl, clattering out of the town for a morning's drive up the hills. Again, too, they heard the noise of hoofs, and one of the grey-coated English would come riding in from a fresh gallop.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

A SPA MORNING.

IN the bright white hall of the Pays Bas, with half its doors and windows open on the gay garden, breakfast was going on. The real British came dropping down in little parties, clean, bright, and fresh ; some with their letters, and busy with their English papers of only two days old. Of these mornings at foreign drinking places, with the sun out and the air cool, and coming down freshly perfumed from the hills, every one enters into the day's life full of eagerness, and hope, and spirits. Here, now, Mr. Lepell, who had been up as early, but had been writing letters

while they walked, looked up with a quiet smile of welcome and delight as he saw his two girls, with their soft glowing faces—in which there was still a tinge of sadness left, struggling with a new sense of enjoyment—coming in. They came up and kissed him ; at which a burly young Belgian, shaped like a humming-top, smiled half in amusement, half in contempt, to a thinner friend with whom he was breakfasting.

Mr. Tulloch sat afar off, at a special little table of his own, with a whole mail of letters and papers about him. He sent them over the *Badeblatt*, or *Kur List*, with the roll of strangers ; and they were presently reading with curiosity that mysterious description of the men and women of all countries, and the strange distortion of their titles. In a moment there was one of their eager natural smiles upon their faces, and the elder, Lucy, called out :

“ Papa, she is in the hotel ! Miss Bell ! I am so glad ! ”

A friendly waiter, one of the good-humoured German boys, who was hovering about the table, heard this remark.

“Meess Bell, she always breakfast upstairs with her lady.”

At a table opposite, two gentlemen, whose faces they knew perfectly, were breakfasting, in an idle, languid way, as if they despised the meal, and the place in which they took it. They hardly cared to drop their voices, and yet they were discussing the two girls.

“The whole of that infernal place will turn up here by-and-by,” said Colonel Bowyer; “those two little rustic bits are coming on—eh? What would you say to my taking them in hand? True nature—eh?”

“Regular,” said the other; “but don’t be so greedy. Hang it, you are at everything. Finish off with one first, you know; we’ve that Jenny business on hand still.”

“*We!*” said the other, contemptuously; “much good you are! Who made you one of the concern? You don’t push the thing on, *I* can tell you.”

“Perhaps I don’t,” said his friend, good humouredly, “but I can be useful sometimes. To tell you the truth, Bowyer, I wonder you waste so much time on the

business. There's that race next week, and we are losing good company and real sport in this humdrum. There's nothing wrong with your blood or your liver, is there? There is not with mine, I know. And this is a second-rate woman."

"Jenny?" said he; "oh no, you're wrong there. To you she is. You can't follow; it's like showing a countryman one of those crack pictures in the Louvre. He'll not know which is the top. I see a good deal in her. She is as wise as an owl; full of cleverness."

"Oh, I dare say!" said the other. "I was thinking of her looks."

"Well, if you come to look into it, she's not so much; but have you lived so long, and knocked about so long, and have not discovered that all the pretty women are the least pretty—eh?"

The colonel was pleased with this paradox, and said it over several times.

"No," he went on, "there's nothing much in her eyes or in her figure, but, somehow, it's in her air, I think. She piques me. And besides, that fellow—that snob

Carteret—has been making his remarks, talking about being humbugged. I must give him a lesson in that department."

"No fear of you," said his friend, "if you take that into your head; but for all that, I think I shall finish my affair before you will have done yours. Ain't it curious—the old lady?"

Both gentlemen laughed quietly.

"'Pon my soul, I believe the old creature is 'gone' with you; it is a most comic business; she has money, and for a needy fellow like you——"

"She gives out that she is fond of me."

"And what has she up for to-day?"

"A drive; a drive, sir, in her coach, up to some old ruin like herself!—I'm for going."

"So am I," said the colonel; "but you must see that there are no tricks. If that Jenny should be at any of her games, shutting herself up at the last minute—— You must settle all that with old Sandwich. I'll not be made a fool of again."

"Never fear," said the other; "I'll touch up mother Sandwich—give her my orders."

It's a very clever game, that of Miss Jenny."

The other's face grew a little contorted.

"Clever indeed, when one sees through it; the stalest trick in the world. A mere common adventuress. What business has she with her coyness, and modesty, and shrinkings? She had better take care, I can tell her!"

"Indeed she had," said his friend, seriously.

Thus was the unhappy girl discussed by these lawless gentlemen, in the public room of an hotel. Their own characters, indeed, would not bear much looking into—especially that violent Indian life of the colonel. No wonder, indeed, that this "poor companion" should keep herself as retired as she could, shut up as much as possible; and it seemed a sort of Providence this coming of the two gentle, simple girls, who felt such pity and kindness for her state.

Thus, then, the Spa day began; that is, the pastoral Spa day. The *true* Spa day, in the eyes of the "administration," did not commence until noon. The morning the

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two girls spent unpacking and arranging their things. From their window they saw that old Mrs. Sandwich, with gay yellow ribbons fluttering from her bonnet like a pennant from a mast-head, attended by her humble, lowly waiting woman—for such, of course, so coarse a woman *must* consider the person whose services she had chartered. They thought, when she had come back, that they would go in to her and see her.

After twelve they were out in the court, under the trees of a little arbour—a spot where many of the guests were fond of lounging in the shade. They would repair there after dinner and after breakfast, and sit in the most pleasant exclusiveness for an hour or two—at least a certain party of them, who were a good deal drawn together. As they sat there, their small pretty faces bent down over their work, and talking softly over a letter from Charles Russell that had come in that morning, they saw Jenny and her “slave-driver” returning through the garden—the first walking sadly and demurely, the second a true red-cheeked,

sun-inflamed, coarse woman, to whom only money and means had given station and power. They saw the look of resigned weariness and suffering in their friend's face as she passed into the house. Presently she reappeared by herself, looking back with alarm, and came fluttering up to them and sat down beside them with a sigh of relief, like one who had escaped.

"I can only stay one moment," she said, sadly. "I just ran to see. I *dare* not stay. Oh, how happy it is to *know* that there are friends in the house. I slept so sweetly last night thinking that you all had come."

The three talked together for a long time. Miss Bell had her work also. No one passed through the little garden. She saw by their sympathising faces how deeply they felt with her; so with some delicate consideration she passed by her own troubles, and began to ask them. Soon Mr. Lepell came down looking for them, and, with a dreamy air, sat down near his daughters, and listened to what Jenny was telling them. He spoke very little, but listened with interest; and she, with some

shyness, told her new friends little incidents about the place.

Suddenly the figure of Mrs. Sandwich, all bright and dressed with new and fresher yellow ribbons, was seen at the glass door. She came walking hastily towards the arbour, and Mr. Lepell saw Jenny break off her description, and in seeming flutter lay her hand upon her buckle—*i.e.* her heart.

“Oh, she is coming,” she said. “I should not have done this. But I wished to avoid it. She wants me to drive out with those dreadful people. I can’t—*indeed* I can’t.”

“Who? Which?” said Mr. Lepell, hastily.

“There is no help. It is too late now,” she said, calmly.

Mrs. Sandwich, who walked with abrupt stiff steps, came up to her, her crimson face blazing.

“I have been looking for you everywhere. You should have told me. I am going now. Colonel Bowyer is waiting, and the carriage is coming round.”

“Oh, madam,” said Jenny, “if you would

not ask me. I should not like to go—
inded, no.”

“Nonsense! What do you mean? Why, it was all settled. You agreed. Why shouldn’t you come? Tell me?”

Then the voice of Mr. Lepell was heard.

“If you could kindly spare us Miss Bell for to-day. We are old friends, I may say, and my daughters have not seen her for a long time.”

The soft gentle faces of the girls were turned to the crimson-cheeked woman.

“Ah, yes,” she said, “you were at the Welsh place. I remember you on the beach. Well—she can stay if you like. I can get some one else. Mrs. Smith asked me this morning. Ah! there’s the colonel. Go on,” she called out, “and we’ll pick you up.”

“She seems good natured,” said Mr. Lepell, looking after her. “That was kind of her, considering we are mere strangers.”

Jenny said nothing, but in a moment started up.

“I had better go, after all. She is angry!”

"Angry!" said the two girls together.

"Ah! *you* don't know her," said she, mournfully. "She is very calm. I may escape that dreadful drive—but, after all, if I am to be wretched—I mean——No, I shall go, and risk everything."

She fluttered away. Her dress rustled against Mr. Tulloch, who was coming into the garden in his light grey uniform. He looked after her, and came up slowly to where they were sitting.

"There is a driving party," he said. "Old Tow-row going out with two officers. They say the old lady is in love with one of them; and our friend who has just left you has *her* friend—that doubtful Bowyer. So it is very well arranged."

"Oh, Mr. Tulloch," said the elder girl, with reproach, "you do her dreadful injustice. She doesn't wish to go. *We* know it."

"No," said Mr. Lepell, smiling; "you have not heard all that we have. I am afraid she has a weary life of it, poor girl."

"Has she?" said Mr. Tulloch, looking down the garden. "She has good rosy

cheeks, however. I should say that she was well able to work through the world, and take care of herself. However, I have been living in India, at the back of God-speed. Mr. Lepell, would you trust the young ladies to me. There is a little tiny carriage coming round—such a pony and such a carriage! By far the best in the place. Quillacq always keeps it for me. If the young ladies would honour an old Scotchman, I would take them such a pretty drive.”

“Oh, papa, we should so like it, but we could not leave you.”

“Well, I was almost sure I’d have heard something about a chaperon. But you are too sensible. I admire you for it, my dears. The folly that some young girls talk about that!”

“We should not mind it in the least,” said Lucy, with a warm glowing smile.

“We seem to have known you for years.”

“Go, go—do,” said the father, eagerly, and with great fondness. “Amuse yourselves, and get this delicious air of the hills. It is so kind of Mr. Tulloch, and I

am sure the best return we can make is to accept his kindness. And go as you are, too."

"We needn't dress, papa," said they, smiling.

"Sensible, again," said Mr. Tulloch, delighted. "Here is our pony—mottled like a circus horse. Do you see him? Quite a charger. Quillacq is a good fellow. Known him these four years. Do come."

Without hesitation they packed up their work, and with that sort of expression of trust, which verged on devotion, in their faces, went with Mr. Tulloch. They came up to the father. The elder took his face between both her hands, and kissed him on the forehead and cheeks. "Take care of yourself, pet, till we come back," she said. Perhaps they did not so much care for the expedition, but they knew that he was always delighted when they were going to be amused, and for that reason went.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

JENNY'S STORY.

WHEN they were gone, and the dun pony had trotted away with astounding energy and spirit, as if he was drawing a perambulator or "go-cart," Mr. Lepell stayed by himself in the arbour. He was fond of ruminating, and his soft quiet face was for a long time turned to the crest of the rich green hills. Then he sighed—sighed heavily. This was almost a habit of his—for he nursed this sorrow, and almost petted it. He was thinking, too, of his two daughters—for whom he now lived, as he fancied in himself—sitting now in the little carriage, and being amused. The elder, he thought, was

every day coming nearer and nearer to her dear mother's devotional face.

In this sort of mournful dream—in which he had spent a good many hours of his life—he suddenly heard a step, and looked up. It was Jenny standing before him, rooted to the ground in a fright. She looked behind her timorously, but had not courage to fly or to advance. “I thought they were here,” she said, pressing her hand to her waist. “I did not know—I was certain to find them——”

“No; they are gone out to drive, Miss Bell,” he said, in his gentle way. “They said they would not be long, either. I see you have escaped your drive, after all.”

“Oh, thank Heaven, yes,” said she, with fervour. “But I don't know whether I have done right. She will be furious. At least she had reckoned on it, and I was too weak to object. But I have let it go on—and now I don't know where to begin.”

Mr. Lepell's eyes were full of interest.

“What is your dread?” he asked. “Who is it? Is there any one?”

“Don't you recollect,” she said, sadly

"But, no, you have other things to think of. But oh, you helped me so then, and, I dare say, thought nothing of it. You remember that Colonel Bowyer?"

"Yes," said he, starting; "is it the same?"

"The same," continued Jenny, excitedly. "No! but a cruel, wicked, ungenerous man. You know what I suffered then, and how I was persecuted, and how, by an agency of kind, generous, honourable *protectors*, whom God raised up for me as if by a miracle, I was saved—yes, *saved*. I did not think of you then as I *ought*. I was confused, overpowered. But you were my saviour! But for you I should have sunk under the calumny."

"It was nothing," said he, colouring. "I did nothing. I saw that there was an ungenerous wicked attempt made to hunt down one whose only fault was not knowing great people. We did a little—all we could—and those dear girls far more than I."

"No, no, no," said she, sadly. "It was you—you alone. They were, indeed, kind

—too kind. But you were known, respected; and when they saw you stand by me, I was safe. But, since then, you know not what has happened.”

“Yes,” said he, embarrassed; “I heard a little—they told me—gave me a mere hint—I was so grieved—we were—and I know you will believe me when I tell you that we sympathised with you.”

“*Sympathised!*” she said, with a start.

“But you are standing all this time, Miss Bell,” he said, rising. “If I could give you any more assistance any way, I wish you would make use of me. I have very little beyond those dear children to live for now. Thank God I have some means, and, they tell me, some brain. If you would make use of me in any way, it would be of service to me. Thinking for other people occupies my thoughts and prevents me dwelling on dismal matters.”

“Oh, how delicate! how kind! how truly delicate!” said she, sinking into one of the iron chairs. “It is what I would like. Oh, if I thought I could speak freely, and could consult you.”

"You *must*, my dear Miss Bell," he said, earnestly. "I ask you—it will be a favour. You don't know how we may help you. As it is, I can guess a little—that Colonel Bowyer——"

"Exactly," said she, looking round frightened. "You *have* guessed it. He is a base, cruel, ungentlemanly man. I, who know so little of the world—I, for the moment, at that Penwillion (you remember that dreadful day!), thought that he was loyal and generous. Since then he threw off the mask. I suppose he thought that when the fine ladies turned against me, I was a mere contemptible object—a prey that he could do what he pleased with. Since then—— but I *dare* not say more."

There was a deep sympathy in Mr. Lepell's face.

"There is something in his look," he said, with emotion, "that almost tells me that. I do not like to judge harshly of any one, but still, there is something bad in his face."

"I have none of that penetration," said Jenny, softly. "And I don't know how to

learn it. I suppose I never *shall* learn it. I seem to have grown quite helpless. But from that day, this man has pursued me in the basest, cruelest," continued Jenny, with vehemence, "and most unmanly manner. You cannot fancy, Mr. Lepell, all I have gone through since you were at that place—years of misery, hopelessness, and reverses, all crowded into a couple of months. Will it weary you if I tell you in a few words? I had an aunt, a kind, generous woman, the only one that liked me, indeed, the only one there *was* to like me. She had told me she had said that she would try and be in the place of the mother who had left me many years ago. Try, she said, Mr. Lepell, for she knew how impossible it was ever to fill *that* place. But she tried to do it. I looked to her as my stay and support in *some* degree. For I have always been independent and tried to *work* my own way. I should scorn to rest on others altogether. But it was something, Mr. Lepell, to know that there was *one* left who had a little affection for me. But this is all tedious and selfish."

"It distresses you, perhaps," said he; "but to me it has a very sad interest. Do go on."

"I was expecting her every day," she went on. "She had been ill, but was better. Then there came that unhappy day when I was made the victim of accident and malicious tongues. I did not care for that; for I have some spirit here," and she laid her hand on the large buckle of her belt. "But there were malicious people who envied me her affection. I suppose they fancied I was intriguing to cut them out of their *money* expectations. Why, I had seen her will—her will, Mr. Lepell,—often and often read every word of it. There was perfect confidence between us. She showed it to me herself, and she had left me, out of her twenty thousand pounds—how much do you suppose? One thousand! I did not care for it. I implored her not. But she would. That was what I was 'currying' her for! Some of the miserable souls who envied me her friendship, soon heard of the wicked, malicious story, and of that wretched day. She was ill at the time.

They did not care for that. They had their own ends. You will guess the rest."

"I do, indeed," said he. "It was base, unworthy, though what I should expect. I could tell you things that I have suffered. But your aunt?"

"She is dead now," said Jenny, deeply moved; "died in enmity with me, believing the dreadful things they brought to her ears. Oh, it was horrible, Mr. Lepell. It comes back upon me sometimes in the night, like a black shadow on my brain. She went out of the world with that hideous spectre before her."

There was a silence for a moment or two: "And I suppose," he added, "what she had shown you——?"

"I don't know, I never thought of that," she said, agitated; "but now, how do I stand? Alone—absolutely alone on the earth! No one—no one to whom I may stretch out my hand!—Not a being to whom I may cry. Oh, Mr. Lepell, how happy you should be with those dear, soft, gentle girls!"

"And yet I have been deserted too," he

said, mournfully ; “ I have been all but left alone too. I can understand your feeling too well, Miss Bell. What did you do ? If we had been but there ! ”

“ I know,” she said ; “ but I was left in a place which was full and crowded for every one else—empty and bare for me ! I was alone and penniless—I am not ashamed to speak the word. What did I do ? I have not strength of mind, or genius, as men have—as some men have—but at least I had independence. I saw my way there—I could work ; I could make friends. And there was that Mrs. Sandwich—a coarse, but good-hearted woman—who saw my situation and took pity on it ; she asked would I go with her as she travelled ? You know what that means, Mr. Lepell, and the name they call the office ? ” (It was the only time she had spoken bitterly.)

“ I do understand,” said he.

“ Another,” she went on, “ in my situation, might have shrunk from it as a degradation ; I don’t consider it such. Anything *honest* that we do for ourselves can never be

a degradation." (Jenny said this without any melodramatic pride or effect.)

"She means me good, I know, but she is foolish ; and, if it is not harsh to say it, has no delicacy of feeling. However, *that* I have no right to bargain for. But still, oh, Mr. Lepell, my situation at *this* moment is critical!—What *am* I to do? That cold, cruel, unmanly man, he knows that I am weak, that I am powerless, that I am dependent! He knows that she is foolish and weak, and he has followed us on here!"

"Followed you on here?" said he, wondering ; "from that place?"

"Yes," she said, "and every day is bolder and more insolent in his advances. He looks at me with a contemptuous smile ; and he is right, for a girl in my situation has no right to have honour, or shame, or respect—at least the world thinks so. And she thinks it an honour, naturally—a woman that has lived in the world, and is of the world! Tell me what I am to do,—give me some advice! Do, Mr. Lepell, for my heart begins to fail me in this struggle."

Her head was bent down ; he could not

see her face under her bonnet. (She had given up her little Penwillion hat since the days when troubles had overtaken her.)

Mr. Lepell remained some moments without speaking; his soft compassionate eyes spoke a heart that felt deeply for every mental trouble in that poor, dependent, helpless, but brave creature who sought his aid.

"Listen to me," he said, "dear Miss Bell; you may indeed rely on me—on us. Those dear girls feel an interest—I cannot tell you how strong a one—in you already. Use them as much as you like, or as far as you can. And as for that bold, insolent man, behave as nobly as you have hitherto done, and depend upon it he will be cowed. Shall I speak to Mrs. Sandwich?"

"Yes—No, no!" said Jenny, in real alarm; "that would be ruin. She would think I told everything about her secrets; she would never forgive it; and—oh! indeed," added Jenny, tossing her hands, "I should not have mentioned it to you, dear sir."

"No, I see," he said, thoughtfully; "it would be better not to say anything to her. Well then, we must only think of something. Meantime, Miss Bell, I am very glad you have come to us; and believe me when I tell you that you have at least three warm and sincere friends in this place."

Jenny felt that this was spoken with such warmth and feeling that she instinctively looked towards his hand, as if she would raise it to her lips. But her warm, beaming face spoke all that she would have expressed by that homage, and much more. Suddenly she heard the little wheezy town clock—that was yet musical and mellow, with all its wheeziness—striking. She once said to the two girls that it was like an old native dog of the place toddling along a roadside, and inviting the younger dogs to join it.

She started in a fright.—"How the day has run by," she said; "and there were a hundred things I was left to do. I shall have to suffer; yet I do not care much, for I can now go through it all with infinitely greater

comfort. You know not, dear sir, how your words have strengthened me. I can now see a little, where all before was dark. I have a more cheerful heart now than I have known for many a day!" And Miss Bell ran away across the garden into the house.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH..

“HIS LORDSHIP.”

MR. LEPELL had a book, but he sat a long time after she was gone—thinking. “Poor girl,” he said, half aloud. “She little thought how well *I* knew the servitude she spoke of. I can feel for her indeed; so cheerful under it all, too, and so ready to make an effort. These are the ones that really suffer, and that I fear we cannot help. Then he thought of that curious coincidence of their both being bereaved; and that led him on to think of one whom he had so loved, and whose image he was often fond of calling up in the long hours he sat alone.

It was about two o'clock. Often he heard the cheerful crack of the whip outside the court in the gay street, for there was much driving for the gay strangers at this time of the day ; or he heard the bells of the heavy omnibus as it rumbled by. Many people passed across, in and out, in the bright sunny uniform of the place, and all noticed the grave, the ruminating, almost handsome, grey-haired gentleman who sat in the arbour—about whom they knew there was a little cloud of interest from the two “interesting little girls” they had seen with him. One lady even said there was “a sort of poetical charm about him.”

Among the rest, a tall thin gentleman who kept his chin very high, and who had a sugar-loafed, pigeon-coloured felt, hat, and a stout English oak walking-stick, came in with his hand under the fold of his waistcoat, and a *Standard* sticking out of his pocket. He passed half across, stopped, put up his glass, and then walked slowly over to the arbour and sat down.

“Shade here,” he said, taking the hand from under the fold of the waistcoat to

lift the pigeon-coloured hat. "This is one of the reasons I always come to Blum's. A most worthy woman in herself, but this—er—thing," he added, looking up at the roof of the arbour, "is what makes the charm. No, we don't have this sort of thing in England. No." (Arbours were plentiful enough in that country, but he meant the general *al fresco* life.) "You came last night. I saw you come in at table d'hôte, from the top of the table. God knows, I don't ask for these social tokens of rank, as if we were settling precedence in the House of Lords. I am not ashamed of belonging to the House. I believe it's a thing we are all pretty proud of. Though I suppose there is not a body of men in the kingdom, take them all in all, so free from speck or stain. But I don't want to go about the Continent with my back labelled 'Loveland,' and a coronet over that. No, no. Sorry I can't offer you one."

His lordship had been lighting a cigar during this time, and he now motioned a closed case towards Mr. Lepell, but, curious

to say, gave no explanation of the reason he could not offer one of the cigars.

“ You are staying at this house?” said Mr. Lepell, absently ; then corrected himself hastily. “ Of course you are. It seems very comfortable.”

“ I like it, and like it simply because I'm not too nice. I suppose I could go to your Orange, or your Holland, or your Bell-Voo, or to the whole tribe of 'em, which they swear are better than this. They may be,—in fact, the Orange is.” His lordship had his hand again under the fold of his waistcoat in a ministerial manner. “ But mark.” Here he half closed his eyes, and enjoyed several “ puffs ” of his cigar. “ But mark. What do you get?—what do you get?”

He folded his leg over his knee, and, with the hand well in, became wholly ministerial ; for the moment he was on the benches of his lordship's House in his popular attitude.

Mr. Lepell, a little weary, could not say what you got.

“ You see,” said his lordship, “ here's what it comes to. Give me clean linen,

open windows, and my tub,—those *are* luxuries I require, and they give them to me here. Do you not like the place more and more every day?"

"It seems charming," the other said; "the prettiest I have seen. Coming in last night, it was like fairy land."

"Ah! possibly—not at all unlikely. It grows upon you. You fall in with its ways, you know. Even that place over there, where you what-do-you-call it——"

And his lordship made a sort of twirl on the table, to express Roulette. "It's the fashion to abuse it. I never do. I was just in there for a few minutes—just put down a little silver. See! Look here!" added his lordship, diving with extraordinary satisfaction into his waistcoat-pocket. "And look again! and look again!" His eyes sparkled with delight as he showed three two-franc pieces in succession.

"You have been lucky this morning," said Mr. Lepell, with a smile.

"Got it out of them," said the other. "I was determined to do it. Quite a run, you know. Just put down my little bit of

silver. It came up. Put down again. It came up again. I think I shall put down in that little way every day for a few minutes. Seen the *Standard*?" continued his lordship, unfolding it with great satisfaction. "This is St. John's paper. Haven't read a word of it yet." And then he began to read.

He read sharply through the first page, saying, as he turned over and folded it down carefully, "Ha! ha!—a very good scene in our House. You should get this paper and read it. They report us better than any other."

Then from the glass door fluttered out Jenny's figure. She ran over to the arbour. But when she reached it she started back, naturally surprised at finding some one with Mr. Lepell, whom she had left alone. She looked from one to the other, embarrassed.

"Can we do anything for you?" said his lordship over the leaf of his paper. "Want anything?"

"No, no," said Jenny, hurriedly; "only thought I should find Mr. Lepell alone; that is, I mean——"

"That is still possible," said his lordship, arising with a gallant bow. "I can walk about the garden."

"Oh no, sir. I did not mean *that*," said Jenny, crimsoning. "I don't know what I am saying. I speak so stupidly."

Mr. Lepell felt for her confusion. He came to the rescue.

"It was merely to ask a question, I dare say, about what you were saying to my daughters. Was it not?"

"Ha! not so bad," said his lordship, again deep in his paper. "Lord Grey de Wycliffe has made another of his good stings at Talboys. Wonderful creature!"

Irresolute for a moment, Jenny gave Mr. Lepell a piteous look, covered her face, and went slowly away. Mr. Lepell looked after her, wondering and mystified. Still, after all her confiding, given so generously, did she not deserve a little more practical assistance than this? And in a few moments he got up and walked slowly to the glass door of the hall.

She was actually there with her bonnet—fresh, and a little coloured with the heat,

and with her hair a little roughed at the edges of her forehead.

“Oh, you understand me,” she said, springing towards him joyfully. “What must you have thought. It was only a favour. I was going to ask a little favour. And oh, thanks, thanks, again for saving me. I mean now—when that gentleman was there. I was so absurd—so supremely ridiculous. But I never know what to say or do, and never shall know. Whereas *you*——And the little favour I told you of—I troubled you with—so much to-day——What I would beg of you is,” she said, half imploringly, “conjure you,—not to say anything of what I told you. I *should* not have told it. Better to have kept it to myself.”

“Was that all?” he said, smiling. “You may depend on me. I would not betray you for the world. I am sorry you should think it.”

“I ——” said Jenny, with something like a toss of her arms. “There, again! It was not that I meant. No, no, indeed; no. But from them—keep it even from

them—those dear kind girls. Would you promise me?"

"Well," he said, "I was thinking it would be better to let them know—for it would make them have a deeper sympathy for you; but as you wish it——"

"As a favour—a *great* favour," said she, hesitatingly. "I know what you say would be the wisest—and I cannot see what would be best for me—but still——"

"Then it is to be a secret?" said he.

"Ah! that is it!" said she, with a start, "a secret. *Our* secret. And will you let me, sir, come to you again in my little difficulties—for I know I shall have plenty."

"Yes," said he, "do. I should like it. I should be glad to give you what help I can."

"How good—how kind. Now I must go back to prison, and wait for *my* mistress."

Then she tripped away. No wonder that her face expressed happiness, and that her round cheeks glowed, or that she gave Madame Blum a sweet smile of content. That

lady said to her: "Pourquoi mademoiselle, ne va-t-elle promener en voiture? tout le monde est sorti," &c. At which Jenny, who did not understand a word of the French tongue, having never, from her orphan condition, enjoyed the advantage of masters, smiled on her first, and then shook her head, with a contradictory motion, half to one side, half up and down—which might be dissent or assent or mystery, according to the meaning of the speech.

Madame said "Non?" with an interrogative look, and Jenny nodded again, and passed up hastily to her room.

Again came round the dinner of that day. On the steps of the glass door opening into the gardens, his lordship, who was a little before his time, stood in the sun. He was talking to another tall and gaunt gentleman in grey, who had a hard lake-coloured face, grey whiskers, and low youthful "turn-down" collars. The lines of his nose were ruggedly aquiline, and there seemed a cold selfish tone about him.

"You should have seen me," he said, "just an hour before dinner. I and that

Campion went in. They don't like me, I can tell you, and that croupier with the nose, I saw him whisper to his fellows when I came to the bottom of the table."

"Yes?" said his lordship, leaning against the white pillar, with his hand under the waistcoat-fold—in precisely the attitude of the great full-length by Buckle in his dining-room. "Yes. How good. And you——"

"These ruffians, they don't know even their own swindling business. You should have seen how I walked into them. Changed a thousand-franc note—played ten naps at a time. I had soon covered up my note. You should have seen how the fellow ground his teeth as he *had* to pay me. They don't know their own trade—one of our race-course ruffians at home would teach 'em. Why, last year, I got three hundred out of them as easy as whistle for it."

"Most curious," said his lordship. "Old England, I believe, is good for something still, on any ground. I recollect saying that to old Tate, who sits on our side of the House (quite past his work, and always croaking). Why, even I myself got a fair

share out of them. It wouldn't do for me to get into it, you know. Farrer has cautioned me. Here," added his lordship, laying his hand on his forehead; "here—must take care. But I was at work all the afternoon. Only in a little silver way, you know. And I declare," he added, going with great satisfaction to his waistcoat-pocket, "I got this out of them—and this—and this," and with triumph his lordship showed the three or four two-franc pieces he had shown to Mr. Lepell. "See! and see here!"

"Why, last year," said Mr. Monkhouse, "you know, I knocked three hundred out. You should have seen the fury they were in, at my walking off so coolly without giving them their revenge. They thought they had me all sure. They didn't know who they had to deal with—a wide-awake fellow — d——d set of swindlers, and I'll give 'em another lesson this year too." And Mr. Monkhouse jingled some of his gold in his pockets. "Look, there is Baker coming to dine here to-day."

"Baker," said his lordship, putting up his glass. "Show me Mr. Baker."

And he was shown a low, coarse, burly man, with black tail-shaped moustache, and an enormous white waistcoat.

"He is taking the small change out of 'em, too," said Mr. Monkhouse. "Plays the whole day on system with a confederate. They'd grind him if they could. Well, Baker, doing those blackguards?"

Mr. Baker smiled under his moustache tails, and tightened his coarse skin, which showed a network of pink and cracked veins through the skin as if his face were one human sausage.

"Pretty well to-day," he said. "Slow and sure, you know."

"I hope the system is answering, Mr. Baker," his lordship said. "Wonderful—really wonderful."

"I saw your lordship at work," said Mr. Baker, abjectly, "and sweeping in your gains."

"Yes, yes," said he; "I did pretty well in my little way. Why shouldn't I pick up my crumbs. Ah, there is Adolph going to ring us in. Good deenay, O juheard wee, Adolph?"

Then the wonderful meal set in once

more. Down came all the guests, pouring out from this door and that into the court, coming from all directions. Up-stairs was heard the loud slam of doors and the sharp abrupt lock. Every one came—came eagerly—as if afraid of being late. It was the happy moment to which every one looked.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

COUNCIL IN THE ARBOUR.

HALF way down the table, unexpectedly promoted, for at these places nothing is so uncertain as position of this sort, were the two girls, who had come in from their drive. Their faces were even brighter with the exercise. They looked happy, for they had enjoyed themselves much, and had delighted in their drive; and in even the general idea of enjoyment, which was almost new to them. For they so loved their father, and so kept their eyes turned towards him, that it had hitherto seemed to them almost a duty to keep themselves in a gloomy tone that corresponded to his.

Mr. Baker, in his glossy wig and white waistcoat, sat up above the salt, only a place or two away from the noble lord, who was at the top. Next him was a fair and pretty girl, gentle, retiring, and in delight with the world—who had been only married a month. It was astonishing to see with what reverence and interest she and her young lord listened to the dicta of this coarse, rude adventurer, whose steady and persevering game she had looked on at from afar, all the morning. She had seen his calm courage with secret admiration. This is one of the laws of these gaming places; and the reputation of fearlessness at the “tables” elevates the common Bohemian into the ranks of the aristocracy. This adventurer, Baker, in another atmosphere, would have been cast out with contempt; but here, with a curious social infatuation, he was made welcome. And as he ate his dinner and drank his champagne, to which he treated himself, all within the reach of his voice listened with awe. Lord Loveland was one of his hearers, with approbation. He illustrated the subject in a fluent

and ministerial manner as he ate, as if the table was the table of the House, and his soup-plate a despatch-box.

“It has often been questioned,” his lordship said, “whether this, after all, is or is not a demoralising practice—whether the state should look on, and——What is this, Adolph? Coaterlets?” he added, helping himself, as it were, over his own shoulder; —“whether, I say, the state should ever look on. Now, it seems idle to me, importing morality and that sort of thing into the matter. We don’t want it, you know,” said his lordship, smiling; “we only want to enjoy ourselves. That seems to me about the right view, eh, Mr. Baker?”

At the end of the first course the two girls, who had been looking up and down the table anxiously, said to their father:

“Miss Bell isn’t here; I am afraid, papa, she is what she calls on duty with that Mrs. Sandwich. Poor girl! she suffers a great deal, I fear.”

“I dare say,” said he. “When you were out driving she came out to the garden to ask for advice, or something of the sort. I

suppose she got courage to tell all, when she found me alone. My dear pets—Lucy and Helen—will you promise me to be very kind to her, and very considerate? I cannot tell you all that she told me, but I know you would pity her; she deserves all our compassion and kindness. I declare,” added he, with fervour, “I think the poorest drudge in the street is better off, for her situation is very trying indeed, and peculiar.”

“Indeed we will, papa,—look! there she is!”

And Jenny, in a neat close-fitting black silk, that ran round her throat without a wrinkle, stole in and sat down humbly at the foot of the table, trying to escape observation. Mr. Lepell looked down with interest. Three kindly-beaming faces were looking to her. He would have nodded to encourage her, if he could have caught her eye. In a moment he saw the cold contemptuous face of Colonel Bowyer and his friend planted opposite to Jenny, and in each face a glance of significant triumph.

When Miss Bell stole a glance round,

after the first confusion of her entrance, she then saw who was near her, and started: a strange expression of distress came into her face, she knew not what. But Mr. Lepell was watching every stage of her difficulty. There was a chair near them, kept for some late diner; and in a moment one of the little girls, all glowing and blushing with the publicity of the act, had flown down the room and was whispering her. She was rescued, and happily brought up.

There came a scowl on Colonel Bowyer's face.

"What game is she at now," he said. "What rubbishy tricks—palming off such stale dodges on me. By the Lord! if she goes on much more with her acting, I'll cure her; it's just paying her too great a compliment, putting up with such humbug. I'll give her my mind to-morrow; I am ashamed to have wasted my time on such a creature."

"My dear boy," said his friend, "I always told you she was a cool hand."

"We shall see which is the coolest," said the other, savagely; "you saw her wretched

little game to-day, having us boxed up in that coach with that stale old woman, and——”

“Don’t be angry,” said the other; “but when I got back to my own room I thought I should have died of laughter. Come now, it was uncommon clever of her.”

Now the cool evening had set in; the delightful, cool, tranquil Spa evening. A few sauntered across to the little arbour, of which they were habitués. His lordship, as it were, took the chair. It was a sort of little bivouac—the two young girls, Mr. Tulloch, and a Scotch friend whom he had found out, and always called “Tom Gray,” and with whom he lived in a cloud of secret and mysterious jokes. Next to the two girls was Jenny; while Mr. Lepell walked about the garden by himself, with his hands joined behind him, and looking up very often at the sky. Lounging on an iron chair, with his long grey legs stretched out across his lordship, was Mr. Monkhouse.

He was member for Crewe—a useless log of an old bachelor, that for many years had been drifting about in the social parts of

England. But he was very rich, and had the Swinburne interest "to his back, my dear!" the old ladies said, and was often proud to say that he was "a regular John Bull!"—that is, full of the vulgarities, coarseness, and selfishness which make up that popular type, now, happily, almost a type of fiction. He was indifferent to his lordship near him; but his lordship felt a deep interest in him, as being supported by the noble Swinburne interest.

Mr. Monkhouse was lighting a cigar. "No, I shan't go back for some time yet. The party won't want us for ever so long. Besides, I must stay in this hole. Campbell sent me here for three weeks."

"Do you know that cigar smells very fragrant—uncommonly," said Lord Loveland. "I get a craving at times for a particular cigar. Spare me one?"

"Well," said the other, fetching his case out very slowly, and then looking into its mouth as if it were a cavern. "I suppose I can. But don't run on 'em, I say. Don't clean 'em all out. I can't get 'em here, you know."

“Ha! ha!” said his lordship, choosing one; “very good. Must be saving, I suppose.”

Mr. Monkhouse, however, said nothing, but smoked on slowly. He afterwards told some gentlemen of his acquaintance how “that old Loveland had ‘stuck him’ for a cigar—d—n him.”

The young girls, as they worked, were getting quite at home and animated with the two Scotch elderly gentlemen. And they were not of the guild of young ladies who care for “business” in every transaction of life; whose time, speech, and even looks, are so much capital to be expended on proper objects of business. They were delighted with the homage of those two good honest gentlemen. From the importunate young girl who brought round little penny bouquets during the dinner, their father had purchased them some half - dozen. One of them Mr. Tulloch begged with great devotion from Miss Helen, and she had given it with as much confusion as though he had been a young gallant of twenty.

He now wore it in his coat, and boasted of it with much pride.

“Eh, Tom Gray,” he said, “you old carle, you are past your day, I know. You are not worth one of these.”

“Ye started afore me,” said his friend, in strong Scotch, whose hands always rested across the top of his stick, as if on the pole of a banner. “Give me a little time, mon. Look here, Miss Lepell. By this time next week, if we don’t show him something——”

“Ah, you’re out there again; Miss Lucy is not to be approached. There is a chiel over in England, ye understand. Poor Tom Gray!”

The two girls, innocent as young children, were inexpressibly delighted with this style of romantic speech, and talked it all over together before they put out their candle that night. One of them said to the other that she was sure he was so kind and good, he was just the person they might wish to do anything for them, and he would do it.

Jenny was on the outer edge, but she was also without the conversation. The

girls looked towards her wistfully, and tried to bring her in.

"Miss Bell can tell us that, won't you, dear? Ask her, Mr. Tulloch."

Mr. Tulloch's eye became cold as it fell on her, and he answered quietly :

"I will keep it to you, and just to you, for reasons of my own. Now, what do you say, Miss Lucy?"

This cold exclusiveness he seemed to keep up. But Jenny said nothing. At last, on the third time, Lucy said, eagerly and with a glowing face :

"But you *must*, Mr. Tulloch. *I* shan't answer you—you must ask Miss Bell."

He paused. "Oh, certainly," he said, but in a different tone; "as you wish. Now, then, for Miss Bell's answer."

The same cold eye was on her. She dropped hers.

"Don't mind me," she said, very gently. "I don't understand these things. Go on, dears, I *implore* you," she whispered to Lucy. "Ah, there!" and she rose.

Mr. Lepell was standing up, leaning

against a pillar of the arbour, listening to them.

They looked round. It was Mrs. Sandwich in the distance, with bonnet and shawl on, starting for "the Rooms."

"The white slave," said Jenny, passing him, "must to work."

"What," said he, waking up, "does she want you to——"

"Yes," said Jenny, eagerly; "to sit beside her; keep her money; count her money; tell her her cards. For she is very blind. My soul revolts from it. The air is poison to me. Oh, sir, I am *sickening*—sickening of this life."

She was gone. Mrs. Sandwich, impatient, was coming hastily to fetch her, as furious as a slave-driver. Some of them understood the whole scene.

"Look!" said Mr. Lepell, earnestly. "We talk of *your* suffering. But that poor girl! No one here knows what she has to go through. Heaven only is aware of the secret trials *she* has to endure. A slave to that woman who sits there at that table—a

disgrace to her sex—when she ought to be thinking of other things; we must all feel for her.”

“And oh, papa,” said Lucy, in a low voice, “if you saw the start she gave when she saw Mrs. Sandwich. It was like a frightened dog.”

“The puir lassie,” said Tom Gray, still supported on his stick.

But all this time Mr. Tulloch was looking curiously at the green verandahs of the houses, whistling a little, but never saying a word.

“You all seem to have taken a fancy to her,” said he, dryly.

“Oh, Mr. Tulloch!” the two said together, understanding his tone and the ellipsis.

“Don’t you see, Miss Helen, I’m surprised at ye. I don’t like that any one should be liked near you. Yes, she’s a sharp, business-like woman. No one will take her in, I should say—eh, Tom Gray?”

“Ah, come!” said that gentleman; “she’s a nice winning lass. I like her, what I saw of her, I do.”

"Oh, I dare say!" said the other. "But all I can say is this, that she can take care of herself——"

"Which is sairtainly a great blessin' for one in her position," said Tom Gray.

"—Can take care of herself, and will work through the world with great success. Surely this is great praise."

"Ah! but you don't like her, Mr. Tulloch," said Helen, "and we want you to like her."

"Ah! but, you see," said he, gaily, "there are things we can't control, no more, Miss Helen, than we have the power of preventing ourselves liking certain——"

"Vary good, vary good!" burst out his friend; "that's na so bad for Jemmy Tulloch."

The evening was wearing on. It was growing into the early grey of the darkness. Again the lights began to be sprinkled up and down among the trees and houses. It was drawing near the time when all well-regulated minds ought to show themselves at the proper place. Lord Loveland stood up and shook himself.

“I think we ought to——hey, Mr. Monkhouse? About time for the Rooms? We ought to give those fellows their revenge——hey?”

Mr. Monkhouse had his long grey limbs still across an iron chair. “I shan’t,” he said. “It is a bad time, this. There’s always a crowd, and you have to look after your pockets. And it’s rather too much to be watching the sharpers at the table and the sharpers beside you.”

“Ha! ha! very good,” said his lordship. “There is a good deal in that. I think I shall just stroll in and look about me. *My* time for playing is the cool of the day, a little before dinner, when there is a lull.”

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

AT THE TABLES.

VERY soon the whole colony—the virtuous matrons, the correct portly papas, who walked to church every Sunday in ostentatious procession, and the gentle daughters—were assembled at the Rooms. In the well-lighted reading-room, where were all the journals of Europe, was the dogged, burly papa, who said the whole thing was “immoral and disgusting, sir,” but who saw no reason why he shouldn’t get what he called his “whack out of them;” and into naturally broad and honest features came a twinkle of cunning. It is surprising, indeed, what a tone of

“chicanery” infects all the atmosphere; and how a feeling of “doing the administration,” even in the faintest way, becomes the salve for an immoral sanction, even with the most scrupulous.

The quiet, virtuous stillness of that reading-room, and the silky step of the attendant who settled the papers and looked after that innocent recreation—the gentle girls, who came tripping in now and again to “look for mamma,” and who had a confidential whisper with their parent, and then went away—made a curious contrast to the click-click and suppressed hum and chanting that came through the open door.

Here, too, were the fresh English family, arrived by that day’s train, with a daring father coming back to them from the “tables,” showing them his little “bit” of silver just won. Mr. Tulloch, Mr. Lepell and his daughters, wandering up and down, saw this adventurous father showing his spoils with the most unbounded delight. Mr. Tulloch touched Mr. Lepell. The wife and daughters almost clapped their hands with delight.

“Oh, papa, you won all that?”

There was love and humility in the papa as he described the incident of the little adventure.

“I just put it down there at the right moment, you know,” &c.

Their wistful eyes of innocence begin to glisten with incipient greed. It is George Barnwell's story over again in miniature.

The two demure, gentle-looking daughters of Mr. Lepell, looked on—figures of another world, among the corrupted men and women that brushed them at every moment. In no part of the earth do respectable clothes hide such vile, debased natures as in these places. Vice, however, pays such abject homage to virtue, and virtue is so complaisant and tolerant, that the whole passes off very fairly and genteelly.

“Come,” said Mr. Tulloch, “I think the young ladies should try their fortune. It will amuse us. Shall we all see what a five-franc piece each can do for us?”

They were not “Methody” girls, nor had they been so swallowing pious counsels at home that they should ostentatiously

strain at such a gnat. They were almost careless in their outside and public acts. Pleasure and excitement came into their faces at the prospect; but they looked gravely towards their father. His hand at once instinctively sought his pocket.

"Come," he said, "dears, try what you can do. Here is a napoleon between you, and Mr. Tulloch will put down. Here is my five francs."

"And here is mine," said Mr. Tulloch, giving the money to the croupier to get change, who, courteously and with great dexterity, sent it travelling down to the arch-croupier who had charge of the gold and silver. The change came travelling back express in the same way, was steered skilfully through other loose moneys, and reached the first affable croupier, who handed it back as if a favour had been done to him.

"Now," said Mr. Tulloch, with eyes ranging all over the board, "what is it to be—the columns, or the colours, or a number, or douze dernier? I am for the last."

The two girls were in a pleasant and

timorous excitement. In a moment Mr. Tulloch was stooping over the heads of many who were also stooping over, and, after a moment of suspense, had brought up, as if he had dived for it, a heap of silver.

"Come over here," he said, "and let us divide the spoil," with exultation.

There was delight in the faces of the two girls. In the breast of even the most rigorous there is no thrill like that of this first winning. It is glorified money, and has a different look and even feel. They all sat down on one of the velvet sofas. Even Mr. Lepell showed some interest.

"I didn't tell you," said Mr. Tulloch, "but I ran an awful risk. I put 'a cheval,' as they call it, on one of the figures, and I declare it came up. So here is much more than you expected."

They were delighted. Mr. Lepell divided the spoil with them, but he seemed curious about the rationale of the thing.

"What do you mean by 'a cheval'?" he said.

"It is all very ingenious," said his friend.

"Come over here and I'll explain the whole thing. It *is* ingenious."

Then they went to the green board, and in a few moments had shown him the mystery of the thirty-two figures, and of the zero, black and red, and of the colours—the *paire* and *manque*, the pair and *impaire*, the three columns and the "twelves," and all the chances that grow out of these divisions. He had a reflective mind. It was very strange, he said, and not nearly the "unscientific thing" it had been described.

"Ah," said Mr. Tulloch, "that's just the thing we complain of; it's almost 'too scientific.'"

He left Mr. Lepell there with his eyes fixed on the green cloth. He was making a sort of calculation as to the numbers that would "come up." It was hopeless and absurd, he well knew, to count on a special number; but certainly it seemed possible to count on a particular *class* of numbers. If a set of low numbers had been coming up for a certain time, it seemed only reasonable that the turn of the higher ones should come at last. It seemed not only natural

but necessary ; otherwise there would be a sort of fatalism in the succession. He then got one of the cards and a pin, and he found by observation that this theory was a true one. "It is surprising," he thought, looking round on the flushed, nervous faces of the eager gamblers about him, "that this simple theory has not occurred to them."

As he lifted his eyes he saw the red and inflamed face of Mrs. Sandwich opposite, and she was in the act of "raking" in a scattered heap of heavy silver pieces. From nervousness, the edge of the rake at times slipped over many of them, and was trembling in her hands, until the obsequious croupier, who looked after her interests, and seemed all eagerness that she should win, gathered them all up deftly into silver piles, and laid them before her. She was lucky to-night, and was in a vein of success. But now Mr. Lepell started ; for, sitting next her, leaning her round face on a very round hand that came out of a neat lace cuff, was that hapless Miss Bell, who was forced to be banker and marker, and to aid and abet this, for a woman, degrading calling.

Jenny's eye met his ; it had been seeking to meet his for some time, and it seemed to shrink from his look. She wished to hide herself. Both the round hands went to hide the face. "She feels it," he thought, "all the more bitterly because I look on. Good Heavens ! what a cruel dispensation is this, that the gentle and the innocent should be made victims simply because they have no one to protect or aid them !"

But another reflection occurred to him. There was a perking, mincing young French *petit maître*, whose moustaches were twirled up towards his eyes. This gentleman had been glancing sideways at Jenny—had affected to give her more room, had stretched out his hand, which had a glove on it far too short, yet buttoned very tightly, and at last had said something, with a smile and a smirk. As Jenny had told Mr. Lepell, and told him again also, "It does not do for *me* to behave as the great ladies do—I am not entitled to take airs ; I must be civil to every one ; and if sometimes I am exposed, from my situation, to approaches from strange per-

sons, why—I must only put up with it and hurry away.”

All this came to his mind as he saw the meaning eyes of the young Frenchman, who was indeed not looking very much after his money. He thought of his own daughters. “No one dare——” he said to himself; “and yet *this* poor girl—what has *she* done?”

An idea occurred to him suddenly as he saw Jenny once more shrink timorously away. He still gave a look of encouragement, and stole round quickly. He had a slight acquaintance with Mrs. Sandwich. She did not regard him with disfavour; she admired all “good-looking men.” He whispered to her:

“My daughters would like to talk to their friend, Miss Bell. Could you spare her?”

She looked round and nodded.

“Oh, certainly, Mr. Lepell. She can go any time. Only I want her to go back with me to the hotel. I am doing well to-night, you see.”

He turned to Miss Bell. "You are free," he whispered.

(The petit maître twisted his moustache angrily, and told his friends at supper about that old "fripon gris" who had interfered with his "gibier.")

The two girls had been sitting a long time on a velvet sofa with Mr. Tulloch, waiting for their father.

"He is all wrapped up in the system," said Mr. Tulloch; "it is quite new to him, and he is delighted." Papa, they told him, was so fond of figures and calculations, and had taken high mathematical honours at the university.

"Will you come with me into the ball-room?" said he to Jenny. "I hear the piano. Are you beginning to trust me?"

They went into the long white room with the glistening row of pillars all round, and the galleries and the varnished ceiling. And here they saw a good-natured amateur at the grand piano—with a valse going on, and ladies, who had laid aside their bonnets and shawls, dancing with gentlemen in morning coats.

And thus it occurred to the two girls,

looking on with delight at this pleasant *gaieté de cœur* and freedom from ceremony which makes the charm of foreign manners, how hopeless it would be to expect this at home. By-and-by, however, on their third or fourth visit abroad, they would begin to see behind these little theatricals of foreign social life, and discover that these were some light-hearted shopkeepers from Brussels, and not a select upper class, who would be about as reserved and stilted as our own.

Mr. Lepell did not find his daughters where he had left them. "Poor children," he said, with a sigh. "I won't pursue them with my lugubrious moralising. I like to see them take interest in anything. I am so glad I came on here. It has quite dazzled them, and I am sure delighted them. And, do you know, Miss Bell, the life is very curious and worthy of study. We can wait here at this window until they come back."

It was one of the open windows that from the street seemed a furnace window. Mr. Lepell leant on the sill and looked down into the road. Jenny stood by quietly.

"Oh, sir, this dreadful place! It bewilders

me. It was so kind of you to come and rescue me. I *saw* how you did it. So kindly and so cleverly. Indeed I did."

"Yes. I was so glad," he said. "I saw that you were suffering."

"But it begins to-morrow again," said she, sighing; "all over again. She cannot win always. She was winning to-night; and when she begins to lose all, then, indeed, sir——" and Jenny covered her face. "I can't bear to think of it. What can I do, and where shall I turn to?"

"Never fear," said he, cheerfully. "Put your trust above in Heaven, and, under Heaven, in the friends you have. My dear Miss Bell, let me speak freely to you. We have all an interest in you, a very great interest, I tell you candidly; and you asked me, recollect, not to stand upon ceremony, but to come to you and tell you what I thought."

"Oh, sir!" began Jenny, really seeming as if about to kneel.

"One moment," said he. "This sort of life, as far as I can see, cannot go on. I

know enough of the world, though I have been long out of it, to see that such a position is full of dangers for you. Even this place, you must have felt that the sort of protectress Mrs. Sandwich is, is wholly unsuited for one who is so young and—and friendless as you. In a short time she will have other views. I am sure you will not find it desirable to continue with her, and then have you no thought what is to be before you? I don't like saying this," he added, gravely; "and it is only a real friend that would say it to you. Why, even to-night I have seen enough to know that no time is to be lost."

Many people "circulating," observed the grave sad gentleman in serious conversation with the fresh round English "mees" in the window. And the French petit maître, who had been looking, saw it with indignation, and again muttered something about an old "routier."

"Oh, sir!" said Jenny, in a trembling voice, "I have not dared even to set all this before me. I had not courage. But

I feel it is all true. Where am I to look for friends, though? How am I to avoid enemies?"

"Oh, you have no enemies," said he—"as yet."

"Yet I don't know how to make friends. People even have a way of taking a prejudice against me."

"This is often imagination—or a little sensitiveness," he said, kindly.

"No, no," said she, sadly; "even that good and kind Mr. Tulloch—even he dislikes me—has no good feeling to me."

"There is an instance of what I say," answered Mr. Lepell. "Now, if there is one who feels kindly to you it is Mr. Tulloch. I am sure of it. I know it."

Jenny shook her head.

"Ah, no! I have a sort of instinct about it," said she.

"Dismiss it, then," said he, smiling; "have nothing to do with those sorts of instincts. They only lead us astray; and as for sorrows, if you compare your lot with mine—and some of these days I may tell you what I have suffered——"

"Oh, would you, sir," said she, clasping her hands.

"If I thought it would encourage you," he said, "or give you strength, and hope, and courage——"

Colonel Bowyer, on his friend's arm, had been lounging round the rooms, and now passed by. The colonel started.

"Look!" he said; "just look at that old melodramatic fellow! She's at him now. I see her game. She's doing the virtuous admirer. Don't you see?"

The two gentlemen actually stopped, and stared into the window while they made these remarks with infinite coolness.

"After all, she's a common little schemer," said his friend. "Now you see what she is."

Jenny looked up and saw them — and started.

"Oh, sir!" she said, softly, "look there!"

Mr. Lepell saw then, but did not understand.

"Ah! don't—don't!" she said, laying her hand on his arm. "Promise me!"

A little mystified, Mr. Lepell looked again

at Colonel Bowyer and his friend. There was a sneer and a smile on the colonel's face, and he said something to his friend; then passed on. Jenny gave a sigh of relief, as if she had escaped some danger.

"That," she said, softly, "is one of my persecutors! *Now* you can see what I must bear."

"It is ungentlemanly—unworthy," said he, in indignation, "and it must be stopped, too."

Colonel Bowyer and his friend had now walked round to where Mrs. Sandwich was sitting. The colonel stooped down and whispered to her.

"No one helping you?" he said. "How do you get on? Where's the aide-de-camp?"

"Ay, indeed!" said she, pettishly—for she had latterly been losing. "There! she's gone off and left me here. Just like her. Not a soul to help me."

"I saw her a moment ago," said the colonel, "in the window—flirting, I believe—eh? Shall I fetch her back?"

"Do, colonel," said Mrs. Sandwich.—

“Here, Monsieur le Croopiy—voulez-vous changer engcore.”

The colonel went back to the window with his favourite sneer on his face.

“He is coming again,” said Jenny, in terror. “Oh, promise me, Mr. Lepell. Now, not a word! Think of the dear girls. Leave it all to me. I *must* conciliate him.”

“Sorry to interrupt,” said the colonel, “but have come of a message. Mrs. Sandwich requires you again, and wished me to fetch you.”

Jenny bowed demurely, and said sweetly—just as if he was the executioner come to say that the block and apparatus were all prepared—“Thank you, Colonel Bowyer; I am ready.” And she even took his arm.

Mr. Lepell looked after her, a little astonished.

“I see,” he said, “she wishes to conciliate all the world—wishes to keep on terms with all. Well, perhaps she is right. With the life that is before her, it is the best course; and, perhaps, she is very well able to take care of her own interests. I doubt if she wants such grave advice as mine, after all.”

Now came back the two girls with their friend. They were almost in spirits.

"Such an exciting place, papa," said Lucy. "And we saw Mr. Otto, the great Frankfort banker, playing for a thousand francs at a time, and winning so. Do come, papa, and look on a little. Do, now, oblige us."

"Certainly," said he, waking up out of a dream. "I was waiting here — Miss Bell——"

"*She's* all right," said Mr. Tulloch. "We saw her on one of the red sofas in the dancing-room with that wicked-looking captain."

They went over to the table and looked on again. After all, it is as interesting as life itself—and as dramatic—for there is the same uncertainty as in life itself. At no other pastime can people stand and look on with such untiring interest. Next Mr. Lepell was a very short and very white-haired young Englishman — very gay and good humoured in his looks—whom they soon noticed playing very briskly and daringly—as it were "for fun." He had chosen "the

twelves," and would put down a little tiny half-napoleon—which in a second became three. He was tossing these about in his hands, carelessly—in another moment would "put down" again, and would laugh and take up his three again. When he had done this very often, Mr. Tulloch said to him encouragingly—"Well done, sir; that's a very dashing game, and you deserve to win."

The young white-haired fellow became free and confidential at once.

"It's all chance," he said; "I never, I was going to say, touched a card in my life; but I never did this sort of thing before. I only came an hour ago, and strolled in here."

There was an extraordinary bonhomie and ready honesty in his manner. The two girls were just behind Mr. Tulloch, and they were looking at him with some interest. At these places nothing inspires so much awe and respect as success in gaming.

"Some one I met in the train told me these 'twelves' were always the safest in the long run, but I have really no rule. It is

great fun, though, and that is all I care about, you know. But I am keeping you from the table, perhaps?"

"No, no, sir," said Mr. Tulloch, gaily ;
"you can teach us all."

"Shall I go on," said the young fellow, doubtfully, and tossing about his great handful of "little" gold, "or shall I be content?"

He was looking at the two girls without any forwardness in the world, but simply because he saw the interest in their faces.

The younger—Helen—with some spirit, said :

"No, no! I would stop ;" then checked herself, and became crimson.

"I agree with the young lady," said Mr. Tulloch ; "take her advice."

Suddenly Mr. Lepell, who had been in a deep study of the game for the last few minutes, said eagerly :

"No, this is the turn ; the third twelve has not been 'up' for the last four times,—now is the time. I have been watching."

The young fellow fingered his gold irresolutely. His eyes still saw the anxiety and

interest in the faces of the young girls, and he said :

“No, I am content ; I shall do very well ;” and turned away.

“*There !*” said Mr. Lepell, who was still watching the board, “I told you so ; it has come up ! I knew it would.”

He stayed a little time ; he said he would follow them, if they walked on.

“I am so glad,” said Lucy, “papa has found something to study at last ; it will bring him back to his old tastes.”

The young white-haired fellow was a few feet behind them, doubtful whether even the slight foundation necessary for a “gaming-place acquaintance” had been laid. Mr. Tulloch saw him, and called to him cheerfully :

“Going to the Orange, sir ?” said he.

“No. I’m for the Pays Bas ; perhaps it is not so good a house——”

“Capital ! capital ! we are all there, though that is not quite a convincing reason. But it is a good clean place, with a civil landlady. You couldn’t lay out your money in a better spot.”

"And then I have that money left," he said, shyly; "I have to thank your kind advice, for I was very near staying another half-hour. Of course it would have all gone."

"We have all been lucky to-night," said Mr. Tulloch; "and come home winners. The Miss Lepells, here, kindly employed me, and I did pretty well."

When they got to the hotel, and the young fellow had stayed out in the court to smoke, Mr. Tulloch called over Adolph and asked him the name of the new comer. Adolph brought the book——

"Ah! I see, Brett—Captain Brett—de l'armée de S. M. Britannique; very good. A nice ready off-hand boy; I'll give him one of my old Indian cheroots." And he went out for that purpose.

In a few minutes later Mr. Lepell came in. He had only watched the chances of the game for a few seconds, and had wandered round through the rooms, as if looking for somebody. He went on into the bright white ball-room, where the grand piano was just being closed, and where the ladies were

putting on their things again. And there he met Jenny Bell coming back out of the room, with the sardonic colonel talking and whispering very confidentially.

Mr. Lepell turned back sharply. "I see now," he said to himself, bitterly, "I'm quite strange to the world—I'm rather too 'soft,' as they call it. This girl is quite capable of taking care of herself." Then he went home slowly,—and thus their second evening at the watering-place closed.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

DOCTOR FERSEN.

THE bright white sunny breakfasting came round again. The glass doors, which had their muslin veils down, were half open, and the little snowy breakfasting camps were being pitched in a hundred directions. Fresh, delicate, milky-looking little loaves, thick cream, good coffee—everything clean and inviting—these were the *délices* of the morning meal. Young Brett was by himself, at a little table, from which he talked gaily over to Mr. Tulloch.

“It’s a pretty place,” he said. “I was all up the hills this morning,—and had such a scamper! Wonderful views down into the

valley. I met all the peasants coming in, and bringing, I suppose, this very milk and butter. Never saw such good-natured, comfortable, and well-dressed looking creatures. There is a curious old fountain, about two or three miles off, which they call the Sauvinière, where people breakfast, they tell me. Did you hear there were to be the races, the day after to-morrow? and the king and his eldest son are coming, and will stay at the Orange. It will be very good fun, I am told."

Mr. Tulloch listened, greatly pleased at the animated yet composed fashion in which this young fellow "rattled" on.

"You haven't lost time, Mr. Brett," he said; "you have made out more than any of us, though we have been here much longer. Ah! here are the ladies!" And he got up to do homage, while the two young girls, in their black silks, with their grave-looking father, came in. The deft waiters clustered about them, and their own especial waiter, Franz, whom blunt Englishmen called plain "Frank," brought them to their regular place. Young Brett jumped up

eagerly, and said, "Good morning!" as if he had known them for years.

The girls' eyes rested on him kindly, for they liked his hearty, simple manner, and they had talked of him as they let their hair down the night before.

"Just listen to all the pleasant things that are coming off," said Mr. Tulloch. "Races, kings, and kings' sons. Captain Brett, here, has made out everything while we were asleep. What is it, Mr. Brett? Give the ladies the exact details."

On which Young Brett went off into a full account of the coming races, and of the coming king and his son. How it was to be some miles away out of the little town, and how a carriage was only to be secured for napoleons, and for many napoleons.

In his dreamy way Mr. Lepell then said: "Then you must go, dears. Wouldn't you like it? You must have a carriage. We can speak to Madame Blum."

"We might have a party. Would you have room for an old fellow—a fourth place? No; I suppose not. Quite right."

Nothing was then said about Young Brett:

every one would have been glad to ask him there and then, only the acquaintance was a little short. Later, Mr. Tulloch talked it over with them, and it was determined to propose it; both girls saying they saw by his face, "at the time," that he felt he had been excluded.

"Well, I was only asked myself, you know," said Mr. Tulloch; "it wouldn't have been right for me to take so much on myself; would it, now?"

But such a thing had never entered Young Brett's head. His open face showed no such cloud of doubt. He had never dreamed of it; but he was really grateful. "How kind of them," he said; "so good to think of me; but, bless you, I wouldn't crowd them up. I was speaking to Lainez, a sort of horse-jobber here."

"What! before breakfast, too?" said Mr. Tulloch, smiling.

"Yes," said the other; "and he is to make me out a smart thing in the nag way. I can ride beside or behind the carriage, you know."

Now came through the breakfast-room

Lord Loveland in his grey uniform, and fluttering his *Standard* newspaper, as a pointsman does his flag.

"Fine day again," said his lordship. "Was Fersen up here asking for me, Mr. Tulloch? I thought I heard his voice."

(Fersen was the semi-English doctor, who looked after that nation, and more particularly after the noble English.)

"I heard him in the court as I came in," said Young Brett, promptly, "and he was asking for Lord Loveland."

"Ah! hem! thank you," said his lordship. "He is very clever, Fersen—very. Now I really think, if it pleased God to afflict me with any serious malady, I should *almost* think of telegraphing for Fersen. I put great confidence in the man, you see; that is everything." It was scarcely everything. If Doctor Fersen's report was to be taken, it meant that his lordship put little else beyond his confidence into his medical adviser's hands. "Our young friend," continued his lordship, cheerfully, as if he were lecturing on him, "is amused, I am sure, at the notion of severe sickness,

and—er—that sort of thing. Youth fancies that such things are like — er — fairy tales.”

“I do not know,” said Young Brett, with good humour, “what other fellows think, but I must say that the yellow fever I got at Bermuda wasn’t at all like a fairy tale.”

“See that!—see that” said his lordship, waving his flag at him as if he were an approaching train. “Bears out what I say. Now that the danger is over we all smile at it. When,” he added hastily, as if to cut off the chance of a reply—“when did you see Fersen? Thank you, thank you.”

His lordship passed out into the court, where he met the semi-English doctor, who was busy with another patient. The semi-English doctor was a tall, heavy Belgian, without whiskers or moustache, and who spoke English with a very little accent, and carried a china-headed cane. He had been round the English hospitals, and talked of the English physicians as “Brodie” and “Ferguson” with familiarity. The higher English who came invariably put themselves into his hands, and they said to other English

of repute, either at home or when newly arriving, "Of course you must see Fersen."

Katzer and the local medical fry, who took half-a-crown a visit, and sanctioned so degraded a scale of fees, did very well for the common run of visitors. But when Lord Hookspur came, a grey-headed nobleman who walked on two sticks, tended affectionately by Lady Hookspur, who went by his side, and who was only three-and-twenty, it was natural that heavy gold remuneration should be looked for. It was Doctor Fersen's habit to come every day in a half friendly way, thus piling up a series of visits, and at the end, when my lord was going, to "leave it to himself," as a sagacious cabman would do in town. It must be said, however, in Lord Loveland's instance, that this did not answer at all. But then, his lordship took his arm, sometimes called him Fersen; distinctions, during a drought of peers, almost as good as money. And from his lordship's lips came very often the formula, "You should see Fersen," which was also valuable in its way.

In these open-air visits Lord Loveland

always skilfully contrived to keep their relations free from any professional taint. He waved direct medical inquiries off, so to speak, and with a curious art contrived to interweave his symptoms, his bad nights, &c., with common speculations, just as he would do to a friend.

This was a Sunday morning, and his lordship contrived to turn the festival to this very purpose. When he had concluded his little medical narrative :

“ Now, Fersen, we won't go into details to-day. You have called up just to see how I am getting on. Give unto Cæsar, you know, and all that sort of thing. I must get on a black coat for church. God bless you, Fersen.”

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

THE GAMING-PLACE AT PRAYERS.

ALREADY, indeed, they heard the devotional bells of the place hard at work. For some of the bells, which did mundane duty during the week in striking the hour and such offices, of Sundays became pious, and jangled away furiously in the interests of religion. The little gambling place, hypocritical, demure, and pious, had actually a Sunday morning air—a very good imitation of village stillness and pastoral innocence.

With the defiant piety which is characteristic of the Briton abroad, and which seems to challenge the world to look at him and his family travelling conspicuously to his

place of worship, the English were defiling through many little streets, converging to the Concert-Rooms outside the town, which the syndics and mayor had allowed them for a "chapel." The fathers of families marched at the head of their families, every one of whom was efficiently starched, and bore stout home Prayer-books, carried stiffly, well forward, in front.

And thus they marched up the little hill to the old rococo concert-room of the "Wauxhall," where the Reverend William Bowler, M.A., a roving clergyman who had put into this little port for a few months, was waiting to perform the service. Mr. William Bowler's cassock, if held up to the light under the English sun, was found to be full of holes ; but in these places, where eyes were less nice, it did well enough.

As the British men and women walked through the streets to their service—like stern puritans—they were shocked by meeting many little children dressed in white, and decked with flowers and veils, who were hurrying in twos and threes in another direction. For this was also the day of a

little local festival, when the bishop of the district had come down, was to confirm some, and give a sermon.

Close by to the "gaming house" was an ancient church, pitched on the slope of a very hilly little street, which seemed all roof—a perfect wilderness of rusted slates, that rolled and eddied as if it were made of metal, and which at each corner had rusted twisted cupolas—not at all unlike slated piano legs turned upside down. They had seen, a century ago, crowned heads come and go for the waters. There, also, mass had been said for the crowned heads, if they thought it necessary to come; and there, too, the "Electors," and the little "Kinglets" not yet abolished, who came to drink the waters, used to kneel on Sundays. Inside it was all white, with the usual Belgian "hatchments," as they seemed to be, hanging out by iron framework from the pillars. There was an old rich and mellow—but perhaps wheezy—organ, and it was curious, a little after noon, when the great long furnace windows of the gaming-house and the rusted Gothic windows of the church were

open together, to hear the music of infamy and the music of godliness mingling together.

There were a good many foreign great ladies in the town, as well as what the gay Englishmen called "Belgian swells"—such as French and German. These went magnificently to the little Fonction.

It was a sunshiny day, and the sun came through the old hock-coloured panes on to the white flowers, and the priests, and the bishop, and the little girls in the white veils, as innocent as the flowers themselves. It was wonderful to find this little pure spot hid so mysteriously, and set down in such a hotbed of iniquity.

When the bishop had given his sermon, and the noble foreign ladies had collected moneys for the charity, the old organ began again, and the white girls streamed out. Some young Belgian exquisites who had gone with Madame de —— and Mdle. de ——, and had sat out the bishop's sermon very patiently, saw these noble ladies home; then, taking off their hats to the ground, and taking each other's arms, went—and,

consumed with *ennui*—got some notes, and went away to the Rooms for a little play.

Meanwhile, the Reverend William Bowler had done *his* work up at the “Wauxhall,” and had delivered an inciting and impressive discourse. He was, in truth, a “good honest fellow,” with the unfortunate gift of too good spirits—which, in the eyes of the pious, was “levity, sir, levity.” The residents came home in the same defiant procession, again meeting some of the benighted children in white. The two young girls’ faces in that old tarnished “Wauxhall” concert-room had been turned towards the Reverend Mr. Bowler with a soft devotion and implicit trust, as if he were, indeed, some Man of God. Many of the young English “swells” had noticed those gentle eyes: one sister’s face being a little inclined, like an old pre-Raphaelite picture, the other’s being piously turned towards the ground. Coming home, Young Brett, now a firm friend—an acquaintance of ten minutes always made *him* a friend—walked on with them in front, and amused

them by his natural comments on what they had seen and heard. Mr. Lepell and Mr. Tulloch came on behind. Said Mr. Tulloch :

“That fellow Bowler is ‘a lad,’ I suspect. There was something about his eye, you know. By the way, it was rather thin—the whole business—wasn’t it? Not much money taken—eh?”

“I don’t know,” said Mr. Lepell, in his absent way. Then, looking back, “I don’t see—I don’t see Mrs. Sandwich.”

“No ; nor her young aide-de-camp. By the way, that’s a clever girl—a very clever one. Too clever for me, I confess.”

“You said something about that the other day,” said Mr. Lepell, fixing his large eyes on him. “Now, do you know anything about her? I have a reason for asking.”

“And I certainly for telling you,” said Mr. Tulloch, “if only for the sake of those two charming girls of yours. You should be very proud of them, Mr. Lepell, as I know you are. Just look at the way they walk—the graceful sweep of their dresses ! The old fellows laugh at me, and tell me,

another old fellow, that I am in love. So I am, and that is the reason I have such an interest in them. And now, my dear sir," he added, stopping suddenly and turning, "I tell you, candidly, I don't like that Bell, or her ways. I suspect her, I do indeed. I have been about the world a good deal, have seen all sorts—savages and no savages—and I have a fair notion of character. And now I am sure you will forgive me if I say she is not the woman I would throw much with such innocent creatures as those two sweet girls."

Mr. Lepell looked at him, startled.

"But have you any reason?" he said, after a pause.

"In justice to her—no," he said. "But I have an instinct. I never was far out in even judging a nigger. But I tell you what—if you are anxious about it, *I know I can make out*. Someway, I don't like her."

"Ah, then," said Mr. Lepell, eagerly, "do you know, something of the kind occurred to me last night. And yet it would hardly be fair——"

At this moment they were passing the

little rustic church, and two ladies came down a turn suddenly and passed them. It was Mrs. Sandwich and Jenny. The two gentlemen stopped, confused. Jenny was fresh as the morning in a light bonnet (since her relation's death she had given up her little waggoner's hat). Mrs. Sandwich stopped to ask the way to some road or walk, and while she did this of Mr. Tulloch, who drew her away to a corner and pointed it out with eager flourish of his stick, Jenny and Mr. Lepell were left together a moment. There was deep reproach in her eyes.

"My *friends* are at work," she said, "and of this bright Sunday morning. Ah! it cannot be denied," she added, sadly. "I saw it in your faces."

"We were talking of you," said he, coldly. "By the way, I must overtake my girls there, so will you excuse me?"

"And why not?" she said, absently. "Why should I be exempted? Ah! I see! I knew it days ago—I quite foresaw it. It has always been the way. Whenever any one was *beginning* to be a friend—or even

to be kind—there was sure to be a shadow come between us. But all the same, dear sir—a thousand thanks for your goodness. Over your words of comfort I shall think, and think again.”

“But, Miss Bell——” he said, eagerly.

“No. I must go to duty,” she said, sadly.

There was no necessity as yet—Mr. Tulloch had not yet finished with Mrs. Sandwich. The two girls, looking round, had seen Jenny, and came running back to her. But she shook their hands half coldly, half sadly, and withdrew from them to join “her mistress.”

When they had separated, Mr. Tulloch said: “Queer old lady, that, but a good-hearted, good-natured soul at the bottom. But the other one, that girl, seems on the high horse a little.”

“Do you know,” said Mr. Lepell, “I begin to doubt about what you were saying. We should be careful—with a poor girl in her station, you know. She drew off so wounded, all because we were a little changed in manner.”

"Changed in fiddlesticks! I beg your pardon," said Mr. Tulloch, warmly; "I didn't mean that. Heaven forgive me if I do her injustice; but that seemed to me all part of the trick."

"Poor girl!" said Mr. Lepell, absently. "If we do her wrong, what a cruel injustice!"

Mr. Tulloch looked at him curiously. "Never fear," he said, with a laugh, "Mr. Lepell; I shall take care there shall be no mistake. Leave it to me."

"But she has enemies," said the other—"I know that—who tell stories of her, and——"

"Leave it all to me," said Mr. Tulloch, smiling.

The girls now came up, with anxiety in their faces.

"Poor Miss Bell!" Lucy said. "I am sure she was suffering this morning; and that dreadful Mrs. Sandwich, who takes her about. What was the matter, papa?"

They talked a good deal over Jenny, and then got home. Then the Spa day subsided into a sort of lull, which on Sundays always

obtained from about one till three. It seemed as though the Spa people were busy with a siesta. But for the gaming-house it was a gala day. Sunday was a day of brisk work; for the holiday people came over from the great towns and crowded in. In the Rooms there was a crowd of rough raw agricultural people and mechanics—men with earrings in vellum-coloured ears, and heavy rings on tawny first fingers—foreign bumpkins looking on with open-mouthed curiosity. For many of them it would turn out anything but a holiday of pleasant memory.

During that warm Sunday, while there was a gay crowd pouring in and out to the gaming vespers, the band was busy in the open air on the Prado, at the “seven hours,” or “four o’clock walk,” under their leader, Deventer, and where there were yet gayer crowds passing to and fro. From a little pagoda the strains of music floated forth.

There was the café in great work, and the crowds from the neighbouring towns standing and listening to Deventer and his music. Here, too, were the regular congregations of

the place. Sauntering up and down, back and forwards, was Lord Loveland, on the arm of Doctor Fersen, who was proudly exhibiting this noble to the crowd, and, unconsciously, taking his lordship's company in payment of his fees. And there was Mrs. Sandwich, all gaudy with flaring ribbons, and holding her parasol stiffly, sitting on a chair, with her modest handmaid waiting near her. The two girls were also walking up and down with their father, delighted with the crowd and the gay dresses. They soon found out Jenny.

"Papa," said the younger, "do you see Miss Bell? Shall we go to her and get her to walk with us?"

Mr. Lepell was thinking of Jenny at that very moment. He started.

"No, no," he said; "not now, dears! She is with her friend."

"Oh, she won't mind, papa, Jenny has told us so. Poor girl! she gets no exercise; I'll run."

"No, dear, *no*," said he, decisively; "don't disturb her. After all, until we know a little more of her, we needn't take her up so

to be kind—there was sure to be a shadow come between us. But all the same, dear sir—a thousand thanks for your goodness. Over your words of comfort I shall think, and think again.”

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warmly ; recollect, we know little or nothing of her."

The two soft faces were turned on him with wonder.

"Little or nothing, papa?" they said.

"You don't want to walk with me, I suppose," he said, kindly ; "I am stupid and twaddlesome." And two bright smiles contradicted him bluntly. Still they wondered secretly at this change.

Jenny, who had wondrous eyes, was watching them—saw their natural faces, which spoke every feeling intelligibly, and knew that they were busy with her. Mrs. Sandwich was a woman of little conversation, and did not address her. On that day, by the laws of British society and taste, and perhaps of decency, she was restrained from her play ; so Miss Bell was enabled, without hindrance, to look on at the little panorama that was defiling before her. Suddenly she saw, far off under the trees, Mr. Tulloch with his stick, talking to Colonel Bowyer. She drew in her breath. "Ah!" she thought, "that man is at the

bottom of this, and he is trying to ruin me."

At dinner that day Mrs. Sandwich and her companion did not dine at their hotel, but went to try a new one. At the Pays Bas they had a yet larger party. After it was over, and they were gone out into their harbour, Mr. Tulloch took his friend aside, and they walked together round and round the garden.

"Well," he said, "what did I say to you this morning? I have got out the whole story now."

"About ——?" said Mr. Lepell, perhaps knowing perfectly what the subject was.

"About Jenny Bell — best authority, fountain head, and all that sort of thing. Quite bears out all I said."

"And what have you heard, and from whom?" said Mr. Lepell, eagerly.

"Oh, I'm not at liberty to mention; I was bound up. But, my dear friend, the story that I heard—and at first hand, too, recollect—is quite sufficient to show me and you that she is not a suitable companion for

those two dear girls. It may be exaggerated—it may not be true. I don't set up to be squeamish ; but I am a blunt old Scotchman, and always anxious for the interests of those I like—and I like them. So excuse——”

“There, that's quite enough,” said Mr. Lepell. “And I do thank you most sincerely.”

All that Sunday—that day of rest surely for one in her condition—seemed to be for Jenny a day of special trouble. Mrs. Sandwich, her owner, was, no doubt, chafing against the cruel social law which prevented her sitting at the “tables.” It was a cruel restraint, for on this day there was a special *entrain*, and excitement and enthusiasm which was almost impossible to resist. The rooms were crowded ; money was being won fiercely, as it is on every feast day. So that it was natural—or at least so it seemed to friends and sympathisers who watched Jenny from afar off—that she should appear to find some indemnity in persecuting her unhappy dependent. At least, this was the impression that the two soft and gentle girls

—watching her with devout eyes, knowing that their father did not wish them to be with her, and seeing her following her task-mistress humbly and resignedly, wherever she chose to lead her—gathered from her demeanour.

Late in the day, when the English had come from their second service at the “Wauxhall,” Mr. Lepell was going reflectively up the great stairs of the gambling-room, with his friend, when he met Mrs. Sandwich and Miss Bell coming down. Mrs. Sandwich had some question to ask Mr. Tulloch, whose “Scotch sense” she admired. Mr. Lepell waited, but Jenny kept behind her mistress with her eyes on the ground, with the saddest expression in the world. Yet at the same time she drew herself up with a certain air, as if recollecting herself.

“Here,” said Mrs. Sandwich, turning on her in her usual despotic way, “ask Mr. Lepell about what you were saying this morning; he will tell you what you want, and give you proper advice.”

He was already a little touched by her hopeless look; but he remembered what he

owed to those dear, gentle, innocent children, so he said, coldly,

"I am the worst person in the world, Miss Bell, at answering questions, or at giving advice; I can hardly answer or advise myself."

"Then ask some one else," said Mrs. Sandwich. "I'll speak to Colonel Bowyer about it."

Jenny shrank away, and said, faintly, "Yes, ma'am." Her mistress, who had a rough blunt way, then said to Mr. Tulloch,

"She's afraid of that man, the foolish woman. Such absurdity! Come along, We're all too puritan to have a little amusement to-day. I suppose the British would eat me alive if they found me with a pin or card in my hand. Such folly!"

And she passed on. Mr. Lepell was very silent for the rest of the day. The dinner went by, and the evening came. There were brisk times up at the gambling-rooms; the people had poured in, the place was crowded. It was hardly possible to find a seat.

The air was hot and stifling, and the great windows were gaping wide open. A sort of frenzy for play was abroad, and the tawny-fingered men with the earrings, and wild eager women, strangers and residents, were crushing and struggling towards the table, with arms lunging out over each other's shoulders, flinging down their silver and gold with tolerable ease, but only recovering what they had won by desperate "clutching." The English, in grey and white, walked to and fro, carrying their hats behind, looking on and pitying.

It was getting towards eleven o'clock, and the excitement was increasing. The tawny men with the earrings seemed only eager to get their money on to the table somehow, though the next minute they were swept back like a wave, and lost what they had won, almost as certainly as what they had lost. It was a frantic craze. Mr. Lepell had been watching the game, and trying some of his mathematical combinations as a mere experiment, and found the game following them exactly. He was astonished that the trained gamblers had not hit

on this simple course, and he naturally felt a sort of pity for them. He went back to one of the velvet sofas where was Mr. Tulloch, and thought of other things.

Young Brett came up and sat down beside them.

“I have just been at that Club, as they call it; a stupid place enough *for* a Club. But as they ‘got me in,’ I have no right to complain.”

“You fall on your legs, my friend,” said Mr. Tulloch, smiling.

“No, indeed,” said Young Brett, gravely; “but I must say people are very kind to me. Much more, I am afraid, than I am to them. But there was one odious fellow there, who had been dining with some of the French racing men at the café—they all came in together very noisily, and ‘fresh,’ as we would call it.”

“Got up a ‘row,’ of course?” said Mr. Tulloch.

“No. But this colonel began to talk and swagger in a way I am always ashamed to hear an Englishman talk. The Frenchmen, of course, like talking of their con-

quests—every Frenchman lives for that sort of thing. But it's unhandsome in Englishmen."

"And who was this?" said Mr. Tulloch.

"Bowyer, they called him. The Frenchmen began talking of that Miss Bell in their own way; and one of them said to Bowyer that he was not making much way in that direction. On which, this colonel began to talk in a way that was really disgraceful; saying that all was not over yet; that this was part of her artful little game; and though she had affected to 'keep him off' latterly, still he knew what she was at."

"And did he say all that in a public room?" said Mr. Tulloch.

"He did, indeed," said Young Brett, "and much more. I declare my ears tingled as I listened to him. So I couldn't help stooping over and whispering something to him, which I must say he took very well, considering that he knew nothing of me nor I of him. You know," continued Young Brett, "at the mess and other places, where men get together and have nothing

much to do, they get quite a habit of talking in that way, and—I never liked it, or could do it myself. But I declare this passed anything I ever heard, and I am sure the man can be no gentleman.”

The large eyes of Mr. Lepell had opened gradually as the speaker went on. He presently got up.

“Could you come here, Mr. Tulloch?” he said, and brought him to the window. “A light breaks in on me! Tell me,” he continued, “candidly, was it not from this Colonel Bowyer you heard that story? Do.”

“I was intending telling you,” said the other, a little confused. “Well, you are right.”

“I knew it,” said Mr. Lepell; “and I know the story now. The man is a black-guard—a slanderous fellow—that ought to be exposed. But see how cautious we ought to be. This poor girl,—both you and I have been doing her sad injustice. I blush for myself, I do indeed.”

“Well,” said the other, quietly, “we may have been out in this particular instance. Besides, what the colonel says may

be true. But I tell you, I have an instinct that all is not quite right with her. She is too clever. Something in her look."

"That is what we thought yesterday," he said. "What she must suffer, poor thing, for I showed her by my manner what I thought of her. It was not right; it really was not fair. It has distressed me more than I can say. We are accountable for every idle word; and I have gone about with many idle words, cautioning my daughters and others. I should not have done it."

He spoke very excitedly; his cheeks colouring and his eyes sparkling, as they always did when he was excited. Mr. Tulloch wondered a little, but said, "Well, well, well! Perhaps I do her wrong; but I don't give up my old Scotch opinion as yet. Only *wait a little*."

There was a tremendous crush at the table. It was getting close to twelve o'clock. The gamblers felt that their time was shortening every moment, and crushed closer to the table. Fifty arms were being stretched out to get their gold and silver down at all risk on "the lucky table."

There were to be but two or three turns more, and the croupiers had given that notice. Faces contracted with hesitation, now became smooth with decision. There was a shower of money, for in these last throws there was believed to be a lucky fatality. Mr. Lepell did not, indeed, heed them ; he walked away hastily out of the room, and then home. He was eager to repair an injustice. All who knew him well, knew that there was this sensitive chivalry in his nature. His nerves were so finely strung, he shrank away from the bare thought of having done a wrong. When he got into his white chamber, all the house had gone to rest. He went to his desk, got out paper, and began to write. He covered some pages before he went to bed. Then went down, laid it in the little recess in the hall, where all papers, letters, and parcels for the guests were laid.

In the morning, Miss Bell, coming down to fetch papers and letters for her mistress—part of her duties—found a letter to herself in a hand she did not know ; and when she got to her room read the following :

“ Spabad, Hôtel de Pays Bas,
“ Midnight.

“DEAR MISS BELL,—I dare say you will have been surprised at what occurred yesterday, and on the night before. I can only say I am truly sorry for my share in the matter, and hope you will make some allowance. Perhaps I myself make too much of the matter, and fancy things that are purely imaginary. But I am miserably sensitive myself, and may foolishly suppose that everyone else is the same. Still, I think I understand your nature a little. Besides being sensitive, I have suffered a good deal. I have fallen out of the way of the world, and am behind the time. A dear, dear friend was always saying that an error acknowledged was better than an original good action. You will not ask me, I know, to go into details; but I own to having misjudged you, and, I will say, cruelly. By the merest accident I found out my mistake only half an hour ago, and I lose not a moment in telling you that I feel acutely the injustice I have done you—am repentant, but am sure that you will forgive. At least consult me in your

difficulty, and give me an opportunity of showing, by my usefulness, that I feel an interest in your fortunes.

“Yours very sincerely,

“ARTHUR LEPELL.”

Jenny read this letter with great satisfaction. Persons in her position are more than usually sensitive; and she had noticed the sudden and capricious alteration in his manner.

“I did not want him,” perhaps, thought she. “I want nobody. I am grateful for any ordinary attention; but to be ‘taken up’ hotly and then treated so coldly—‘let down’ without rhyme or reason—that my pride will not suffer me to endure.”

No doubt some such thought as this was in her mind. A smile of delight was on her round face as she read it coming up the stairs. She flew to her room, and on a little note, about the size of her Common Prayer-book, she wrote:

“DEAR MR. LEPELL,—Your letter—oh,

how happy it has made me! How kind—how good! I did indeed feel the *alteration*. Your delicate sense of perception was right. I thought I had won your good esteem and *some* little interest; and when I saw the sudden change I was very unhappy—I shall, indeed, think of it no more. Your kindness, dear Mr. Lepell—your chivalrous kindness and delicacy overpowers me.

“Believe me, ever yours,

“JANE BELL.”

Jenny was out betimes in the garden, sitting in the arbour with her straw hat on. She had not been there long, when Mr. Lepell came out with his two daughters. He stayed a moment with them on the steps of the glass door. “My dear Lucy and Helen,” he said, sadly, “you recollect what I said to you yesterday about Miss Bell. I acted for the best, I did indeed; but I was wrong. I am not ashamed to acknowledge it before my dear children; but I was misled. I accepted what I heard—it is hard to be always wise; but it is our duty now to make it up to her as much as is possible,

and I now ask you, my dear girls, to be as kind to her as you can, and try and do away with your father's mistake."

"Dear papa," they said, looking up affectionately into his face, as they always did. "How *good* you are!" Then, after a pause, "Shall we go to her now?"

He hesitated. "I must make reparation myself first," he said. "It is a little humiliating, but it is only right and proper, and should be done at once."

He walked over to the summer-house. Jenny rose to meet him.

"I have come to make atonement—at least to ask forgiveness and indulgence," he said.

"Oh, sir!" she said, "it is I who should rather—at least, I could hardly sleep last night thinking of it. I *did* see a little change towards me in your manner, sir, and I was so grieved, for I could not tell how I had offended you."

"Offended me! Not at all," said he. "No; it was an absurd delusion—a mistake which I was led into. I am not used, of late, to the world, and I take things on the sur-

face—as if they were all true. I must begin to learn to be wiser—not to receive everything upon trust.”

“Ah, I can guess,” said she, with animation. “Even here there are those who are not friendly to me—people with whom I have never spoken—who have never seen me before these last few days—and yet, who can descend to persecuting a poor friendless woman. You know is this true or not. And I ask you, dear sir—you, who are so fair, and kind, and honourable, even to delicacy, as I know—can this be right, or fair, or generous? I had an instinct even from the beginning,” she went on. “I knew at the first moment that *he* had conceived some unkind, unreasonable prejudice against me—just as I had seen that *you*, dear sir——” and she stopped.

“Well,” he said, kindly, “what had I done?”

“Just as I saw that *you*—in an instant—with a look—had divined my whole situation—how helpless and unprovided I was—how lonely I stood in this cold, cruel world. You saw this, dear sir—did you not? Or

perhaps, indeed, were not busying yourself with so——”

“I did, indeed, suspect that you were not so happy. But again, if you will let me offer advice once more, let me give a caution about that man. He is cold, cruel, and dangerous. And, forgive me if I mention this, he has dared to speak of *you* in a public room.”

“I can believe it,” said Jenny, with flashing eyes—“a mean, cruel, pitiful revenge. If you only knew the long series of indignities I have had to put up with from that man. He knows that I dare not speak to Mrs. Sandwich — my *mistress*—who is his friend—*who takes money from him for her play*. Yes. But, please Heaven, it shall end in a day or two. Every morning I pant to see the post. There is help coming. It is on the road, and, if it should fail me, then Providence,” added she, devoutly, “will send aid.”

“Help coming!” he said, starting; “you are not going away?”

“Yes,” she said. “I dare not stay. To be with *her* is, of course, all for my worldly

interest. She has connexions and interest, and tells me she will get me on, as she calls it. I don't want it—not, at least, for such degrading wages. I shall regret the place for one reason—that I leave those who understand and know me. Oh, sir, you have made me so happy this morning—but—now—what am I to do? If this bold, licentious man should dare to go on—as he threatens to do—with his persecutions, I have no one to call upon—to——”

“Fear nothing,” said Mr. Lepell; “you have friends that will take care of you. Continue in the same firm and resolute course that does you so much honour. We shall stand by you. And I—shall think of something.”

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

THE "WAUXHALL."

THERE was an elderly white-haired gentleman—like a retired banker—who was seen a good deal at the Rooms, and who, in fact, represented the "Administration."

The Administration were people of an awful and secret influence, and were spoken of with bated breath. It was the Administration who supplied the journals, and the reading-room, and the music, and the soft velvet chairs and sofas, and gratuitous shows—and the moral sires and right-minded fathers who read the papers and listened to the music, and lolled on the sofas, often spoke testily of the Adminis-

tration as being niggardly and churlish. They kept a jealous eye on their movements; and, though they never contributed a shilling—on principle—to the revenues of the society—were loud in denouncing the narrow-mindedness and "stingy" policy of the Administration. Mr. Bullington, with his glasses on, and a great broad black ribbon trailing from his glasses—and with the Administration *Times* in his hand—said sourly that he found they were "a near lot"—"a shabby lot;" with more to the same effect. When, therefore, within a few days, a little paper was seen on the table, with an inscription that there was to be shortly a "Fête effèrte aux étrangers par l'Administration;" and when, further, the wise men of the place gave out that the famous Guides' Band was being brought from Brussels to play, these churlish recipients of their bounty only said, "It was high time for them to do something." They even asked, "What was it, after all?"

Mr. Monkhouse heard the news with special scorn. He sat with his grey felt hat over his crimson face, and asked,

“Couldn’t any fool see the game the fellows were at? A real clumsy dodge—to try and take in the gulls with a set of hurdy-gurdies from Brussels! *He* was up to them. They didn’t even know how to go about their swindling properly. *He’d* take advantage of the opportunity, never fear.” In short, these poor Administrators—Heaven knows what interested views they may have had behind—by this little act of spontaneous generosity, would seem to have outraged the whole community whom they sought to oblige.

On a Sunday morning, then, when the English were defiling away to the church, some stout men in foraging caps, shaped a little like smoothing-irons, with two tassels, and with a good deal of white tape about their dress, were seen lounging among the trees, and standing at the café doors. This was some sprinkling of the famous band who were arrived. They were to have played that day at three, in the “Kiosk,” but the rain came on heavily, and it was finally known that the Administration were to “offer” a concert to the strangers and

inhabitants up at the old rococo "Wauxhall," at eight o'clock that night. The honorary supporters of the institution were in delight at this news, for a real concert, with lights, and singing, and playing, was a great deal to get out of the Administration. The practical constituents, however, took these benefits with utter indifference. But all day long the "virtuous" mothers and their children were severally chuckling over getting such a treat "out" of the odious Administration.

Our two little girls were looking forward to it with delight. They doted on music; and now, since they had been living in this place, had begun to look forward with interest to anything like an expedition or excitement. They were only anxious that their dear papa should take them—if he would have no objection.

"No, darlings," he said, "*don't* ask me to-night. Their great music stuns me. It confuses my head. You can go with some of your friends."

Later in the day, he was sitting, as he used to sit a good deal, at one of the little marble

tables of the café, watching the crowd of smokers and talkers pass and repass. The rain had cleared off, though the green branches were heavily charged with wet. But the whole looked fresh. The strange groups of gaunt awkward bumpkins, who had come lounging in from a distance, walked past, gaping at the windows, and houses, and faces. Suddenly two gentlemen dropped into the little bench in front of him—a tree was between—and called insolently, in their own language, to the waiter, “Don’t be all day, too. Look sharp, I say. Two cognacs. An English fellow would be worth the whole gang of these monkeys.”

Then the same gentleman resumed his conversation with his friend. “Yes, of course. I’ll go up to this confounded ‘Wauxhall,’ as they call it. I dare say it won’t be hard for you to guess the reason—eh? I’ve got a plan in my head, my friend, and this time a good one.”

Mr. Lepell looked round the tree. He saw it was Colonel Bowyer and his friend.

He scorned to listen, or to be thought listening, so he rose and walked away. The colonel looked round at the noise.

"D—n that whining methodist," he said, "he's there again! Where did he come from? I tell you what, I have watched that fellow, and I can see he is doing apostle and spiritual father to that sinful Bell girl. But, if I put up with her tricks, I won't stand any of his. I wish he would come in my way! So, if you know a friend of his, you had better warn him. I am serious, I tell you. You know me."

"I don't doubt you," said the other, quietly.

Mr. Lepell went away ruminating. He walked up one of the charming winding alleys that led up the hill, and wandered there for a long time. It was a favourite stroll of his. A century before, in the old bag-wig and grand-tour days, an English nobleman had cut these alleys green, which ran, like ribbons, up to the top in all directions, and were dotted with summer-houses at intervals, like milestones. When

he returned, he met his girls. "I have changed my mind, dears," he said; "you must let me go with you to-night."

Mr. Tulloch was with them as usual. He fixed his eye on Mr. Lepell inquiringly—that cold Scotch eye, which Mr. Lepell now began to dislike a little.

"Oh, papa," the girls said, "we are so glad. And you will like it so. We shall make a little party, and all go together."

"Getting a taste for music?" said Mr. Tulloch, with the dry Scotch eye still upon his friend. "Eh, Lepell?"

The other, still resenting this "hardness," answered him coldly.

"We have been with Jenny," the girls said, "and she was so grieved, that you were not coming. Mrs. Sandwich is, of course, going up there, and has agreed to take her."

"Poor Mrs. Sandwich," said Mr. Tulloch, ironically; "they are turning her into a dreadful ogress—awful. The monster! How she must tyrannise over that unfortunate girl!"

Mr. Lepell said nothing, but walked away impatiently.

"Would you do something for me?" said Mr. Tulloch to them; "but it involves a little secret from papa."

They looked grave and a little disturbed.

"It is not a serious affair," said he smiling; "nothing very weighty. It is a whim I have taken into my head—perhaps a little plot—who knows? It is not, to tell your friend Jenny—who is to be of our party to-night—either of your papa's or of my coming. Will this be too great a matter to ask?"

They laughed and promised him.

"They are giving us something—up—at the—er—'Wauxhall' to-night," said Lord Loveland, from the head of the table. "Very proper indeed—and very suitable. I think they might have chosen another night—Sunday, you know. One day in the week is *not* much for the service of our Maker. Thank you, sir. What shall it be? Some of your champagne? No—no. I always stick to the *vin de pays*—it's the

purest, you know. I remember so well the late Lord Mantower, almost with his dying breath, saying to me: 'Loveland, always ask for the *com—mon* wines of the place.' Well, as you wish. A glass, then, of the champagne."

This was a favourite speech of his lordship's, with whom many people, almost every day, were proud to have the honour of taking wine—sending up their flasks to his lordship.

"I always do at Rome as the Romans do," said his lordship to his neighbours, half apologetically; "a little civility costs nothing, and brings back large returns." (It certainly did in his own instance.)

When the evening had closed in, and the scattered lights were twinkling among the Spa trees and in the Spa windows, making it like another "Wauxhall," troops of the company were seen marching away out of the town up to the ancient concert-rooms. The British parent marched as he would at home, with a daughter on each arm, and each daughter dressed radiantly in gauzes and white. A few carriages, each drawn by a pair of heavy horses, and too

large and overgrown for the roads, rumbled over the great paving-stones in the same direction.

The old "Wauxhall" was already filling. It looked like an old abbey outside, and its high steep roof seemed as rusted and corroded as if it were made of old metal. It had long since been deserted—finer and more convenient rooms having been built in the town itself.

The old ball-room, with its Corinthian pillars and faded gilding, and its cornices a little warped and bent with age, like the spine of an old gentleman, was now lit up; and, at the top, the grand band from Brussels was very busy, under the command of the famous Deventer. There were other rooms open, halls and corridors, and the gardens,—once charming bosquets and labyrinths, where the dyspeptic electors, and the kings and emperors who travelled as Count this and that, had wandered, but which were now in sad disorder and neglected, as old fashioned and worn, and almost as threadbare in their walks, as the velvet coats and flowered silks those persons of

quality and their ladies had once worn. The unselfish Administration too, who provided these *délices*, might indeed fairly get a little profit out of them for its own interests—just as a faithful and laborious host might, at the end of the night, treat himself with a little of his own supper. So to a little by-chamber off the concert-room had been carried up, on a light cart, the familiar pale green board marked with the yellow numbers, and the brass bowl and the twirling wheel. And already were the croupiers at work, chanting their liturgy in the old monotony.

Ranged in their large circle, with Deventer in their centre, the great band was busy with an overture. They were some fifty strong, and each one carried a strange musical familiar of wood or brass, that wound about him, or came up under his arm, and rose and twisted itself before his face, liked a hooded snake about to strike. These instruments, as it were, ran in families, graduated in size. Groups of clarionets—in a diminishing scale, groups of horns, groups of trombones, of great ophicleides—all in

various stages of growth. With these familiars the musicians with the tiny coat-tails seemed to be in deep and confidential intercourse.

It was wonderful the fulness and breadth they brought forth. In the slow portions they seemed to strike in heavy, massive blows of music. From that ring came swinging, broad, resistless gales of sound, that seemed likely to sweep away the listeners like great hurricanes of music. Deventer standing in the centre, and disdaining a music-book, with his eyes on the ground, and his ears quivering like a dog's, seemed to give a suspicious scowl of distrust—as if he suspected every moment some rebellious discord to break out. Then, when the quick movement set in, the sharp, horny clarionets began to trip and fly like race-horses—or like the whirring of clock wheels;—wonderful instruments, that flashed with marvellous precision, and swept down a "run" with a swoop—until they were landed in a brazen crash, and met all their fellows in unanimous thunder. The roll of their little drums seem to "crack out," like

the rattle of rifles, and they closed with a stroke sharp, and clear, and clean.

As Deventer and his men thus delighted their company, there were others at work in the little room close by, into which the swell of the music was borne up to the green table where they sat. What was called high play was going on. Mr. Monkhouse wandered in and out in his grey coat—his felt hat in his hand.

“Just look,” he said to Lord Loveland. “Look at the hand they are making of those gulls! Just the notion, because they have got a new room. *That’s* the bait they tickle them with! I have a good mind to-night to give them one useful lesson—just as I did last year. Two or three cool hundreds taken from them to-night would cure them of changing rooms, and such scurvy dodges. I declare, I have a good mind to——”

“No, no,” said his lordship, looking round in an alarmed manner. “For God’s sake, no—Monkhouse. The Sabbath! Respectability, you know. Only consider what will be said.”

“Well, and what then?” replied Mr. Monk-

house, sharply. "I didn't say I was—did I? I ain't goin' to endanger any one's respectability, am I? There they begin with their old music," added Mr. Monkhouse, turning into the concert-room again. "What are they at now? Why, look at the hue-and-cry they set up about these old pipers and drummers. Why, the Guards—with that feller Godfrey—would just lick them into fits—and no fuss about it. They've a feller there with a 'corny' that I'll back against any dozen of these soup-fed creatures."

"Ha! ha! ha!" said Lord Loveland, heartily. "Old England against all the world, I believe—if she be only true to herself."

"I say, now, look at those—old Sandwich and her men—going off. They have had enough of it."

It was a little procession out of the room. Jenny had come with Mrs. Sandwich, but when two gentlemen had come up to talk to that lady, had obtained leave to go and join her friends.

"I have escaped, my dears," she said.

"Oh, I am so happy. Mrs. S. is in a good humour to-night, and she is happy, too, with her gentlemen. And so, dears, you could not get your papa to come to-night?" she said, looking round anxiously.

The girls could say nothing, but dropped their eyes. Mr. Tulloch, who was sitting beside them, struck in: "I suspect he is tired. It is not such a dreadful privation for him, after all. I don't think he cares much for this. So I am thinking we only waste our sympathies."

Jenny looked at him curiously; then sighed deeply.

"*You* must find it dull, though?" he said.

"Not duller than any other place in the world is to me now," answered Jenny, sadly.

Mr. Tulloch laughed, and almost whistled. The girls looked at her with fondness. Jenny went on colouring a little at his rudeness.

"Mr. Tulloch has seen the world, and has travelled, and knows life. I would give the world for the *indifference*—that sort of

happy coldness—but I try in vain. And yet, even if I succeeded, do you know, I had rather *not*—after all." And she looked a little excitedly at the Scotchman.

Just at that moment came up Mr. Pope.

"Miss Bell," he said, "I am sent for you. I have my orders. Mrs. Sandwich and party are going out to have some refreshment, I believe. They are waiting at the door." And he offered his arm.

Jenny shrank away, and almost clung to the girls.

"I can't, indeed," she said. "I am sure —no—"

"Got my orders," said Mr. Pope—"am to stay on till you consent. Look over there—they are actually waiting our coming."

"You may go, I think," said Mr. Tulloch. "You have done enough—resisted sufficiently. She will go with you, sir."

"I have no choice," she said, rising, and with a flash of her eye. "Mr. Tulloch takes good care to relieve me of *that*. You are quite right." Then she stooped down and whispered them: "*You* understand me, dears. *He* has very natural prejudices. No

matter." And she went away to execution, taking Mr. Pope's arm.

Colonel Bowyer and Mrs. Sandwich were waiting at the door. Behind a pillar, not very far away, and standing up, was Mr. Lepell—who had just come in by another door. He had seen the whole, and understood the whole. As Jenny walked to the door, her eyes roamed restlessly over the whole hall, taking in every face and every seat. "Ah," thought he, excitedly, "she's looking for a *friend* in her distress. She is thinking, out of all this crowd, that there is not *one* that could help her, or that she could turn to—not one, and that the one she *could* count on is away."

He was half tempted to come forward and show himself, to give her a little confidence; but another idea struck him, and he drew back. As they passed out, he saw Jenny look back again hurriedly, as if for aid; and for a second he almost fancied that she must have seen him—but this he dismissed at once as impossible.

"Confound it," said Pope, "what's that?"

Old Lepell squinting at us from behind the door?"

Jenny started. "He's not here," she said, eagerly.

"Bet you a dozen of gloves he is, Miss Jenny. I saw him. There, he's hid himself again."

There was a strange look on the face of Colonel Bowyer, who fell behind with Jenny. Mr. Lepell saw them descending the stairs; and he felt his heart stir with indignation as he thought of this unprincipled libertine, who was so constantly persecuting a poor friendless creature. One of those curious instincts bade him follow them—the instinct that he looked back to later and owned was almost providential—was something half-triumphant! "I will foil that wicked man's designs, whatever comes," said he to himself, with the devotion of a Confessor; and, without a moment's hesitation, followed them cautiously at a distance.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

A DELIVERER.

THEY first went out to the gardens, where there were old stiff walks sadly overgrown, and a round little pond with a mildewed fountain; and in these alleys, he, still following at a distance, saw the four figures walking on—Colonel Bowyer and Mrs. Sandwich in front, and Jenny and the other behind. It was a soft, tranquil night, and the rows of white illuminated windows in the old “Wauxhall” gleamed out through the trees. He looked back for a few moments—heard the sounds of Deventer’s merry men wafted across the garden—but, when he turned, the four figures had gone.

He was greatly puzzled at this disappear-

ance, for the gardens were not very large. There were others there walking about, and these confused him when he began to search. Suddenly he found that some of the winding walks made a century ago by the English nobleman, and which led up the hill, joined the gardens, and that it must have been one of these that they had taken; so, choosing one, he followed them.

They were very winding indeed; and he soon found himself far up the hill without discovering any traces. "Always stupid," he was saying to himself, "dreaming when I should be waking. A pretty protector, indeed! and well suited for that high and generous office!"

Just as he thought this, and was about descending, he heard voices:

"Now, now, you mustn't go back. I say you must not."

This was in a man's voice. It was answered in a woman's—a helpless, tender, frightened, appealing woman's voice:

"You must let me pass. Oh! I implore of you, don't. Let me find Mrs. Sandwich."

The other laughed.

"That wouldn't be easy, now. What absurd game is this you are going on with? What has changed you from a minute ago? Such affectation—as if I don't understand! Come, sit down here, Miss Jenny, on this bench, and listen to me."

"Understand *what*, sir?" said she, in an agitated voice.

"What the devil is over you! Oh," he said, "I dare say a very clever game, but it won't do with me. Now—now, it's no use, my good child, you can't get back,—not, at least, until I have talked to you."

"How DARE you!" said Jenny, in a trembling voice. "Let me go; let me go,—a poor unfriended girl! Oh, let me go!"—and her voice seemed to be broken with terror and emotion.

The scene was at the meeting of two paths. In a second there was another voice heard, and another figure was between them.

"Fear nothing, Miss Bell," it said; "you have a friend and protector here. This manly gentleman shall not harm you!"

Jenny stood for a moment uncertain and almost "dazed;" then, with a scream of delight, ran to him and took his arm. There she stood, triumphant and successful; and the two looked back calmly at the discomfited officer.

"So it is *you*!" he said, almost stamping with rage, "and again spying. I see, my good sir, you must have a lesson given you!"

"Don't, don't," Jenny whispered in an angry terror, pressing his arm, "don't answer him. Oh, you must come away,—lead me away somewhere."

"I tell you, you shall answer for all this," the colonel said, advancing on him; "don't think I shall put up with any benevolent apostle's interfering with me,—even with one of those poor soft creatures who can be taken in by that woman's cant. She is very little of a heroine, I can tell you!"

Jenny was going to speak, but Mr. Lepell stopped her.

"Don't," he said; "we can afford to despise this man's speech. Come away with me from this place."

Again the colonel strode up to them.

"This won't do," he said, roughly; "this fine melodrama won't go down here. If you choose to interfere with me, it must be at your peril; you must pay for it, and account for it, as I have made every man do. So, just take your choice."

Mr. Lepell answered him, calmly:

"This is not the place nor the season, as you must know; this noise before a lady is scarcely the proper way. You know where I live——"

"Oh, sir, no! no!" Jenny gave a wild cry; "a hundred times, no! I shall die!—I shall die if this goes on!"

Colonel Bowyer burst into a genuine laugh, and turned to go away.

"It's too absurd, really. How well she does it, upon my soul she does!"

"Come," said Mr. Lepell, with difficulty restraining himself. "Let us go." And they walked away in silence.

"Oh," said Jenny, after a moment, "*now*, sir, you have bound me to you for ever. I go down to you on my knees, and thank you!—My preserver!—My deliverer!—How

shall I ever express what I feel? It is an eternal obligation !”

“Never mention it again,” said he, kindly. “Only was it not curious?—I had a sort of instinct, when I saw you leave the room, that drew me on to follow you !”

“In the room !” said Jenny, in amazement ! “and were you there ? How strange ! Do you know, I, too, had an instinct that you were not far off.”

“Then it was a mutual instinct,” said he, smiling. “I hope it will always be as true and faithful, and that I may always be as near to help you.”

“God grant it !” said she. “And how brave, sir—how calm and how noble, was that effort, I may say ! Even in all my terror I could not but admire. Oh, sir, if any thing comes of this, and I thought it arose out of *me*, I think I should die !” (Poor Jenny ! It could scarcely arise from any one else, and in her confusion she did not see this.) “I never was afraid of such blusterers,” she said, with a little confidence.

“Don’t be the least alarmed. And now, Miss Bell, let me ask you a question. You

see this is a serious matter. Such risks must not be run again ; so will you think me very curious if I ask you if you have thought what is to be done now ?”

“ I don’t know,” said she, almost wringing her hands. “ What *can* I do ? Where can I turn to ? Will *you*, sir, advise me ?”

“ Well,” he said, “ in the first place, I think it clear you must at once quit that woman. It is evident she is playing into the hands of those men. You naturally don’t see this. I, who know more of the world, do. After what has happened to-night——”

Jenny cast down her eyes. “ Quit her, sir !” she said, slowly. “ Oh yes—I suppose so ; and at all sacrifices—at all risks. I am quite prepared, sir, as you say so. I trust your advice implicitly.”

“ Well,” he said, “ yes, at all sacrifices—at least, *present* sacrifices. That must be done at once. If you would be advised by me, I would go to her this very night. She is unfit to be with your——”

“ This night !” said Jenny, starting. “ Oh yes, sir, at *all* sacrifices.”

“Well, you shall do this to-night,” he said, “and then in the morning we shall see. I don’t do much in the way of sleep,” he added, smiling, “so I shall have plenty of time to think of something. Only rely upon me.”

They were now back in the gardens again. The crowd was passing out of the old “Wauxhall.” Mr. Lepell and his companion separated as by a sort of instinct. In a moment he had seen the girls and Mr. Tulloch, and had flown to join them. Mr. Lepell’s nature shrank from the slightest form of active deceit, but he thought of her peculiar situation, where a breath might be fatal—and approved.

They walked home in the crowd. The two girls and Jenny went on in front, he and Mr. Tulloch came behind. They were silent for a time.

“I saw ye go out,” said Mr. Tulloch ; “you disappeared mysteriously.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Lepell, eagerly. “Such a strange business——” But then he suddenly stopped himself. He saw the cold dry Scotch smile of his friend, and he recollected their conversation of the other day.

"Well," said Mr. Tulloch, still smiling, "you won't tell me the strange business?"

Mr. Lepell coloured.

"I think it would be better not. You have your views in this matter—and perhaps prejudices—and it would be idle in me to think of removing them."

Mr. Tulloch laughed. "I saw you go out of the room," he said, "and I saw that clever creature, Miss Bell, make you out from behind the pillar. She can use those sly eyes of hers pretty well."

"She did not know I was there," Mr. Lepell said, eagerly.

"Perhaps not; but she found you out behind the pillar; and she hadn't been telegraphing to that Colonel Bowyer just before?—though of course, when she saw you, *that* made a little difference."

"Let us never talk on this subject, Mr. Tulloch," Mr. Lepell answered, with a voice that trembled. "I cannot understand it. You, of course, can reconcile it to yourself, but this persistent hostility to a weak girl *does* seem to me unfair and cruel."

"Does it? Well, I shall say no more

about it," Mr. Tulloch said, good humouredly. "Never. I hold my own opinion, and shall trust to time to open your eyes. Where are the young ladies now?"

They were at the door of the hotel, and said "Good night." Mr. Lepell went out into the cool streets and wandered there for a short time, thinking over the strange event of the night. He was warm and excited, and thought over the scene many times. He did not regret it in the least. With that devotional leaven that was in his soul and constitution he thanked Heaven that it had directed him to the spot.

As he entered the hall of the hotel some one came fluttering up to him. It was Jenny. She looked suspiciously round, then whispered to him, "I have done as you wished. It is all over now. I am now free indeed, and upon the world. But you know best, and your advice is more precious to me than gold."

"Have no fears," he said, smiling confidently; "always look forward and have hope."

Jenny shook her head. "I shall never

forget this dreadful night; and yet, at the same time, this happy night! Oh, sir, show me—*show* me some way of repaying you!”

“We shall speak of all this in the morning,” he said, smiling. “Now go to your room. I order you. In the morning I shall tell you how you can repay me. Good night.”

“And, oh, sir,” said Jenny, fluttering back near the foot of the great stair, “will you—may I conjure you to take care and not meddle with that wicked man? If there was a hair of your head touched for my sake, I should die——”

“Hush! hush!” said Mr. Lepell, kindly. “Don’t be afraid; I shall take care of myself.”

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

MR. BOWLER'S FALL.

EARLY the next morning, when breakfast was done, Mr. Lepell called his two daughters aside into the garden. "My dear children," he said, "you know that I only care to live for you and your interests, and what you like is what I like. It is right, then, that you should know what has happened, and decide on what is to be done."

"What has happened, papa?" they said together.

"Yes," he answered, "your friend, Miss Bell, has been in a sort of service, as you know, with that Mrs. Sandwich. She has been insulted—yes, dears, insulted—cruelly

and grossly treated. I dare not tell you now."

"Oh papa, poor Jenny!"

"Yes, dears! By my advice, she has saved herself from further chance of outrage by giving up her position with that lady. She is now free; but, unhappily, upon the world. She has nowhere to turn to. With a courage that does her honour, she has given up good prospects, and a promising situation, recollect, at my advice. And I now come to ask you, my dear girls, what she must do? It rests with you."

He paused, and looked in their honest eyes. Their faces flushed with pleasure.

"Oh, papa, I think—could she stay with us?" the elder said.

"Oh, do you *think* she would? Would you object, dearest papa?"

"Dear children," he said, looking at them fondly, "you know my heart. Yes, you might ask her, for a time at least, until she has found out something. She deserves it."

"Shall we run to her and tell her?"

"Yes, dears; I leave it all to you."

They went up-stairs hastily, in delight at

their new mission. Perhaps it was because they saw he was pleased. They did not notice how Mr. Pope came up very respectfully to Mr. Lepell, and, just touching his hat, asked to speak with him privately.

"It's about that affair of Bowyer's, last night," he said; "a most foolish business, all about a woman, between ourselves, of a certain sort——"

Mr. Lepell turned on him. "If this is what your friend has sent you to tell me——"

"God bless me, no," the other said, starting back, "not at all! I doubt if he knows what I am at. You see, the fact is, these are such infernal holes for tittle-tattle, and such distorted views get abroad of everything, that we just want to have the thing settled, one way or the other. You see, we want to get away quietly, and leave nothing to the scandal-mongers. Don't you see? Isn't that *your* view?"

"Oh, certainly," said Mr. Lepell.

"Well, then, that being so, why make any fuss? You followed and interfered with my friend, you will admit, a little unneces-

sarily, while he spoke with a little unnecessary force too."

"It is well for Colonel Bowyer," said Mr. Lepell, calmly, "that I arrived at the right moment, and saved a young girl from his importunities. That act speaks for itself, and there was no insult intended by it."

"There, that settles everything," said Mr. Pope, with great alacrity; "that clears the air at once. No insult intended. The very thing that was pressing on his mind. Now we can go away relieved."

"Are you going away, then?"

"Yes; this evening. No insult intended; quite right."

"The act speaks for itself. Mind, I withdraw nothing."

"No, no. No insult intended. Quite enough. Mr. Lepell, you have behaved like a perfect gentleman all through: just what I would expect from one of your known character. Good morning."

And Mr. Pope bowed himself away, quite relieved. Mr. Lepell was so single and simple-natured, that he was glad that gentleman took away this comfort with him.

"That man's behaviour," he thought, "was very bad. But still, he was naturally provoked at any one interfering, for if *he* was in *love with Miss Bell, perhaps*——"

Now, while Mr. Lepell was in the court speaking to Mr. Pope, his two daughters had gone to their room, and were just thinking of where they could find their friend, when Jenny herself came rushing in.

"Oh, dear girls!" she said, distractedly, "what is to be done; what *can* we do? Look out—look down into the garden—your papa, your kind, good papa, they are with him—and I fear that I—I am the cause——"

Dreadfully scared, they almost clung to her, urging her to tell them what she meant.

"Promise me," said Jenny, hesitatingly, "that you will join with me; they will force him into it, and he is so honourable, so chivalrous, so high-minded—that, oh!" She hurriedly told them what had taken place the last night. "And he never mentioned this to you," said Jenny, in a sort of rapture. "You know him better than I do. But is

not *that* like him? But no matter! What are we to do, now? Tell me, quick! Advise me!"

The girls were almost stupified. Suddenly they heard a step, and Mr. Lepell entered calmly, but with a little wonder at their agitated faces. They rushed to him, and in a moment had each an arm, and were kissing his hands. He patted their heads fondly.

"What is all this?" he said. "Something has disturbed you. Well, Miss Bell, what do you say? Will you accept?"

Jenny looked wondering, from one to the other.

"Papa," they said, "we have not had time to tell her."

"No," said Jenny, "but I have been telling them, sir, what you had so nobly concealed, as if it were a mere trifle—a bagatelle, not worth mentioning. So it might appear to *you*, but not to *us*. And, oh, sir, forgive me! but I saw you in the court with that man, and if anything should happen, I should never, never——"

"Don't be alarmed. Don't think of such a thing. Your persecutor is going away

this evening. Is not that good news to bring you."

For a second Jenny's face became serious, but only for a second.

"Going away!" she said. Then, with great joy—"Oh, I am so glad. Oh, it is too good to be true."

"And I think that I—that is, we—have contributed a good deal to this. We have routed him. But now to business. Miss Bell, my dear girls and I have been thinking that if you were to come to us for a time, you know—until you can look about you—and make our house your home——"

The girls joined in as in a chime of entreaty and pressure. It was some great favour that they seemed to be anxious for. What could our Jenny do. She looked from one to the other with swimming eyes. She hesitated long. It was too generous—too noble and magnificent. Finally, after an hour's hesitation, she agreed to confer the favour, and they were in a tumult of joy.

Mr. Lepell met his friend Mr. Tulloch shortly after.

"Did you hear?" said the latter. "It is

all settled. That old Mrs. Sandwich is packing up, and goes to-night. I think it is because her friends—those two raps—are off. No matter, a good riddance of bad what-d'ye-call-it."

"Yes," said Mr. Lepell, abstractedly, "they are all going away to-night."

"So, after all, I did that girl a little injustice. I might have spared all my wise cautions—eh? But you know I am a 'canny' old Scot, and like to be upon the safe side. And upon my soul I do like those sweet little girls of yours, and I was afraid of that clever adventurous woman—getting—but now that she's off——"

Mr. Lepell, colouring furiously, turned round to him.

"Oh, *she* is not going. She has behaved nobly. Given up a lucrative situation, and all——"

The other began to whistle.

"So she is to stay—is she?"

"Yes," said the other, looking away; "and I—that is, we—have invited her to come to us, and remain with us till——"

An extraordinary expression came into the Scotchman's face.

"Ye don't mean to tell me, Lepell," he said, "that you have had the *inconceivable* folly to take such a step. For God's sake—think, think, man!—before it is too late. For the sake of those innocent girls——"

"Once more, Mr. Tulloch," said Mr. Lepell, with flashing eyes, "I have to warn you I can manage my own affairs. God knows I love my children as much as any parent ever did. I know what is their interest. But I want no discouragement in doing what I conceive—and what they conceive—to be right."

There was a silence for a moment.

"With all my heart, then," said Mr. Tulloch, sadly. "I was wrong. Forgive me. But I have a presentiment that all this will end badly."

"And I have one," said Mr. Lepell, now in good humour, "that all this will end well. Let us set one against the other."

They heard light voices outside. Up came the three, with their hats on. Jenny

had resumed her "waggoner's hat." They were all full of excitement.

"We are going to walk, dearest papa," they said, "and taking Jenny—our first walk together—under the new system. Dear Jenny, come."

Mr. Lepell looked over, with a sort of triumph, at his friend.

"You see," he said. Then added: "Miss Bell, I have been telling Mr. Tulloch of our new arrangement, and what you have consented to do."

"Are you not glad, Mr. Tulloch?" the girls said together.

"I shall answer for him," said Jenny, sadly. "I know he is not. I have an instinct that he is a dreadful enemy of mine—sworn to exterminate me—*me*—poor Jenny. Is not that cruel?"

The others laughed.

"What do you say, Mr. Tulloch?" the younger girl said, in great glee.

With a forced smile he answered: "Well, we shall see. Time shall show."

Now the garçon was out in the centre of the court, pulling fiercely at the breakfast-

bell, and now the men and women of the house came pouring down from all the eyries and corners, like a flock of pigeons. Out came Lord Loveland from a great glass door—a room on that floor accorded to him by special privilege—and, as he crossed, Dr. Fersen, leaning on the arm of a short, black-whiskered gentleman, in a white linen coat, came in under the archway, and stopped him hurriedly.

“Just a moment, my lord,” said the short, black-whiskered man. “So fortunate we found you, my lord. We wanted to speak about Bowler’s affair. It has come to a crisis at last !”

Lord Loveland looked anxiously towards the breakfast-room.

“Ah! But I have got to—to——” and he humorously made the motion with his fingers of cutting up meat. “Must keep the machine going. See you at the Rooms in the course of the day, Mr. Colter.”

“But this is most important, my lord,” said Mr. Colter, flushing with eagerness. “Such discoveries. No time to be lost—not a moment.”

"My God, Captain Colter," said Dr. Fersen, "won't we let his lordship have his breakfast? As his lordship's confidential medical adviser, I *must* interfere."

"Yes, Fersen—coffee is getting cold—in an hour or so."

"To be sure," said Dr. Fersen—"it will keep. We can come back, Captain Colter." To which the captain assented with pain and reluctance.

Lord Loveland went in and sat down, smiling.

"The way people come to me," he said, "is surprising. At Loveland, all the squires come worrying my life for advice in any little difficulty. I just tell 'em what is the common every-day course—put their shoulders to the wheel, you know—and it seems to satisfy them. And now they seem to have got the same notion here. Before I am out of my bed almost, a deputation comes about the chaplaincy, or something or other."

But this caused a little more excitement among the English than it had done in his lordship. "Is he going away?" "Has he

resigned?" "What are they going to do?"

His lordship smiled. "He *may* leave. They have not posted *me* up in the matter as yet. The man gave a very excellent sermon yesterday—full of goodness, and that sort of thing. I suppose there is something against the man. Here, Eddoor! These coaterlets are not done enough—two minutes more."

The business on which Captain Colter and Dr. Fersen had come was a very serious one for the colony. Captain Colter lived there all the year round—through the heats and the biting frosts—in the season and out of the season—when the place was "filled," and when it was a lonely desert. He was the permanent representative of the English interest through all time, and had a certain power and importance from long residence. At Rome, people talking over their travels asked: Now, was old Colter going on still? He was a sort of half consul. There was a subscription filling—and filling very slowly—for a new English church, and placards, with a drawing of the intended

building and lists of subscribers, hung in the white halls of many of the hotels. Donations were requested to be paid to the credit of "Mr. Colter, late captain in H.M. service, secretary to the English chapel." Captain Colter, too, was indistinctly associated with wines and "packing" objects, and would exchange a circular note also. For years, therefore, he had ruled the visitors, and ruled the clergyman, to whom he served out the miserable allowance that could be wrung from the visitors. Sometimes he changed him on the occasion of a quarrel; at another time he got tired of even a submissive subordinate, and changed him without a quarrel at all—until the Reverend William Bowler arrived, and to him, from the very first week, he took a special dislike. This gentleman had followed gymnastic tastes at his university—had rowed and ridden with extraordinary success—and, it was said, had a sort of private taste, even now, for good and scientific boxing. These were harmless pastimes. But Mr. Bowler was one careless and free in speech, fond of company and "good fellows," and of sitting

round the cheerful board of nights with young Englishmen of quality. He disdained to show any obsequiousness to his "master," and even openly said "Pooh, pooh!" to him, and such expressions as "Come, come—you don't mean *that*, Colter!" But once, unhappily, at a dinner, the indiscreet clergyman had actually "roasted" the secretary of the English chapel, and turned him red in the face. From that night Captain Colter was his enemy; from that night he was always watching him steadily—"keeping his eye on him"—and longing to have him on the hip. But the young clergyman would not go, and had actually "got up a party" who stood by him. The young English found him so pleasant, that they were always making him dine with them at tables d'hôte and cafés, where confusion was drunk to "Old Colter." Several of the "committee," too, thought he was a jovial creature, but could "see no harm in the man." And the fact was that he was good, and without any real "harm" in him.

Captain Colter, the old navy officer, swore that he *would* "get him out." He was in

the habit of using strong language about the clergyman ; he maledicted him freely and with fury. "The fellow," he said, should be turned out of the Church "neck, crop, and heels." His eyes almost grew wild as he spoke of him.

Lord Loveland was at first inclined to support this persecuted clergyman as being a distant connexion of Sir Thomas Bowler. "See, Colter," his lordship would say, "are you quite sure, now? I declare to Heaven he seems to me to be fair enough—he does, indeed. These things will break out, you know. But this you may depend on—they are an old family—a real old family—Sir Thomas, and that kind of thing."

But one day, unhappily, the Reverend Mr. Bowler had come bursting into a circle where his lordship was delivering a sort of lecture or allocution from his place "on the ministerial side of the House," in the midst of which he was bluntly contradicted with a loud laugh by the young clergyman.

"My noble friend," said Mr. Bowler, "where have you been? Who brought you up? You must have had lodgings at the

very back of Godspeed! Don't you know all that has exploded to the days of our great grandmamas?"

"I said nothing at the time," said his lordship, relating the incident afterwards in a very fluent allocution; "of course I could take no notice of such ribaldry; but I must say, on the whole, that such a person must be wholly unsuited for the spiritual direction of a place like this. Of course it is not for me to pronounce——"

And of course, in reference to this new view, his lordship shut his eyes on the relative to Sir Thomas Bowler, and never again advanced that baronet as a plea in bar.

But now, unhappily, the clergyman had fallen upon evil days. The prospect of the Spabad Races had brought with it Count Roux and a few other French gentlemen attached to "le Sport," and the Count and his French friends were glad to mingle with the sporting English of every and any degree. Of the sporting English was of course the "jolly parson," as they called him, and the good spirits and laughter he brought with him to the round café table

where they supped and dined, was quite intelligible, and was relished by the Frenchmen, though his English was not.

Walking up and down the little Prado, smoking his cigar, was his enemy, Captain Colter, who thought he detected a laugh in a key that was familiar to him.

"Oh, it's only that Roux and his set," said the friend who was walking with him; "don't mind 'em."

But Captain Colter had drawn near and looked closer, and was rubbing his eyes.

"What do you say to that?" he said. "A minister of the Established Church—chaplain to an important foreign settlement like this, sir, in the diocese of the Bishop of London—eh? Do you call that decent? Is carousing with French jockeys on the Sabbath—is that decent? Come, sir!"

The friend, who had been an extenuator of Mr. Bowler's little follies could not but say that it was "indiscreet."

"Indiscreet!" foamed the captain. "It is scandalous—discreditable! By G—, his bishop shall know of it! I won't sit by and look on, whatever others may do!

Disgraceful, so it is!" And yet the poor clergyman was not so noisy as his neighbours. He was merely telling "a good story," at which they were roaring obstreperously.

But when Captain Colter's friend had gone, he himself "hung about" the place for a long time, having his "eye" on them, until it got near eleven o'clock, when the party broke up, and, taking each other's arms, took a couple of the little carriages, and drove away out of the town. Captain Colter had an instinct that the Lord had delivered his enemy into his hands, for he waited patiently more than an hour for their return, and secured his friend as witness.

About midnight they heard the sound of wheels over the rude pavement, accompanied by sounds of hilarious chanting; and presently, when the two little carriages came in sight, there was seen the Count Roux standing up, driving, and in the little back seat of the second carriage Mr. Bowler, standing up, waving a red pocket-handkerchief as a flag.

This was the fatal business that undid the chaplain, and on which the deputation was anxious to see Lord Loveland. His lordship, coming out into the sun after his breakfast, found the captain, the semi-English doctor, and another, waiting for him. He stopped on the step to finish his dialogue with that young officer, Brett, near whom he had breakfasted, and of whom he had spoken as "a lad with a very proper spirit indeed." Very often he had made this approbation take the shape of asking for one of Young Brett's fine full-flavoured Regalias.

"What *do* you think of me?" his lordship said, smiling; "actually begging cigars in this way! But I declare, you know, I am so passionately fond of these things, that I believe, if it came to it, I'd exchange my corner seat in our House—anything I have in the world, for a—box of Havanas."

On another occasion, when they were rising after dinner, and a stout Briton would proffer his open case with a "'ave a cigar, my lord?" his lordship would wave it off, saying:

"No, no ; I think I will ask my young friend here, if he will let me trespass on him."

"Oh, all right!" Young Brett would answer, in his off-hand way ; "you may as well—there are only a few left. I have not smoked many of them myself!"

The committee then took possession of his lordship, and laid all the points before him. Lord Loveland looked very grave, and shook his head. He asked, what did "the unfortunate man say for himself? You know we must hear him ; we must call him before us. Even though in a foreign country—a country far away from the British law—it behoofs us" (so he pronounced it)—"it behoofs us to give every one the advantage of the immortal constitution under which we live."

"We shall sit at three o'clock," said Captain Colter, "and put your lordship in the chair."

"Ve-ry well ! vairy well !" his lordship said, plaintively ; "quite right. Give notice to the unfortunate man ; let him have every chance. The whole business is, indeed, dis-

trampling. The enemies of the Church will, of course, turn it to scandal; but we must only do our little duty, Captain Colter."

The committee sat, and the unfortunate man was called in. The proceedings were short.

We all know the acrid fury and animosities of the little oligarchy of broken-down English who govern at these places; a long and enforced residence gives them advantages and a little influence, which the superior class of their countrymen are willing to share in, at the expense of a little deference and intimacy;—their miserable cabals can be matched by no other known cabals.

It was determined that the chaplain should be required to resign, and he was called in. Lord Loveland, a little nervously, was addressing the "unhappy man" on what he called his "folly," when Mr. Bowler stopped him suddenly:

"You want me to go; very well, with all my heart,—I am quite tired of the place, and of your wretched tyranny. So there's an end of it; say no more about it."

His lordship, however, described the scene very often afterwards, on a rug, when dining out :

“ I felt in a most distressing position, as you may conceive, but I was placed there to do my duty. I tried to touch, you know, the what-d’ye-call-it in his heart, but he was evidently hardened, sir—hopelessly hardened. I grieve to say,” continued his lordship, in a low voice of horror, “ when I tried to give him, for his own good, a little advice for the future, you know, I was met with a burst of indecent ribaldry. I was greatly shocked. I believe the unhappy man turned out very sadly.”

His lordship was wrong in this ; for the unhappy man very soon got an excellent living in his native country, where he is at present much liked and respected for his manly nature and practical worth.

But at the head of the table d’hôte, his lordship—eating and talking all the time, as he helped himself over his own shoulder from the waiter’s dish—descanted on this “ sad story.”

“ I really think,” he said, “ when I get

back, I must take up the matter before our own House—bring in a bill, or something of that sort. A single-minded man like Lord Buryshaft would back me. The whole business of religion at these sort of places wants looking into. This should be a warning—Thank you, I will,” said his lordship, bursting suddenly, into a loud voice, and smiling and bowing to a face half way down the table.—“They want me to take wine with them down there,” he said. “Mr. —er—Atkinson, I believe? Waiter!” (in a low voice) “a champagne glass here!”

In this way, then, the chaplain was dismissed, and the committee began to look out for a new one.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

JENNY'S BATTLE.

MR. TULLOCH—honest, Scotch, single, frank, and not in the least selfish—went forth by himself, and was sorely troubled; for he had a surprising interest—an affection tempered by a sort of old-fashioned gallantry—for those two girls. They were, indeed, worthy of such a feeling,—they were so pure, artless, and unworldly; he saw all manner of fatal dangers from that adventuress—as he would call Miss Bell—who had now, as it seemed to him, got a secure and favourable basis for her schemes. He thought it over very anxiously during his long walk up the hills. Coming home, he

had "hit upon" something; and as he came along the promenade, he fortunately saw the two girls tripping along together—softly, and without their new friend. He joined them at once. They were delighted to see him.

"I have been thinking of you all the morning," he said, with his regular gallantry; "that is, of you, Miss Helen. I suppose I am not allowed to think of Miss Lucy, as she is soon to belong to another gentleman, who is to think of her always."

The elder girl appeared to be a little hurt. "Indeed, Mr. Tulloch, I did not expect that from you. It looks like a pretence. I am afraid you are a little tired of me."

"Ah! you make a great old fool o' me between ye," he said, in a comic despair. "Indeed, I don't know wheech of the Miss Lepells I like—I mustn't say love—the best. One day it is Miss Helen, another it is Miss Lucy. In the morning it is one thing, in the evening another. At one o'clock it is Miss Lucy, at two Miss Helen. Ye see, I speak plainly. But now, my dears, tell me about this bride-

groom of yours. I have often wished to ask you what is he like. When is he coming? Where is the business to be? Impudent, am I not? But I always was as inquisitive as an old lady."

Their soft eyes were turned to him, and both laughed. Then they began to tell him what he wished to know, and with artlessness and candour; all, too, about Mr. Russell, his height, size, and manners and character. Mr. Tulloch listened thoughtfully.

"So he is a firm, decided fellow?" he said. "I like that. And has been a Dip—I mean a diplomatist—(this was what we used to call them at the Scotch Club at Calcutta). All the better."

"Oh, he is very clever," said the younger girl, with deep admiration; "he can do anything he wants to do. Do you remember, Lucy dear, his saying that to you? Anything he lays his mind to, or takes into his head."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Mr. Tulloch, smiling. "But why don't you get him over here? What is keeping him—a clever, handsome young man, that has seen

the world, and can do anything he takes into his head?"

"Yes, indeed," said the elder, thoughtfully. "But we didn't like to hurry him. He has business, you know; great business. He has to 'wind-up' everything, he says. He is at Paris now."

"At Paris, winding up everything," said Mr. Tulloch, smiling. "Quite right. But I tell ye what. Do get him here. We shall have all sorts of amusement. There is to be a ladies' ball given to the gentlemen; last year the bachelors gave one to the ladies. This is the return hospitality. I tell ye what—write to him to-day, and tell him to set off at once."

They were both charmed and delighted, with a natural delight. When they went home, Lucy went to her desk, and told her father she was writing to Charles.

"We must get him to come at once, dear papa," she said; "what Mr. Tulloch has said is making me die to see him. Do you think he will come, papa?"

"I shall write too, darling," said he.

"Indeed, I wonder what delays him. We shall be so pleasant together, when you and Helen, and *us all*——"

They were delighted to hear him talk in this way, and with this community, including himself in their pleasures.

Mr. Tulloch walked up and down a long time after he had left them. "Nice, innocent girls," he said, half impatiently; "charming darlings! And all this happiness to be wrecked—as it will be, as sure as my name is Jack Tulloch—by that—by that——"

The person to whom "that" applied now appeared, cool as if she had just been lifted out of an ice-pail—fresh, on this hot day, tripping across to the fountain with one of the girl's glass goblets on her finger. Jenny had long since been with Dr. Fersen, who had recommended her the "Pouhon" water, and she took it regularly and constitutionally three times in the day.

Jenny passed Mr. Tulloch quite close, and gave him a quiet bow—it was more a dropping of her eyes than a bow. He half turned

away his, then, as if recollecting something, called out "Miss Bell," and walked after her.

At that hour of the day there was no one taking water, and no one to "serve" it—the handmaid was having her furlough.

"Well," said Jenny, standing on the step, with the goblet in her hand, and her dress gathered up about her, "you can want nothing with *me*, surely, Mr. Tulloch; I, who am your enemy?"

"I am not your enemy," said he, "Miss Bell. Perhaps I am the friend of others—and this, you suppose, is being your enemy."

Jenny laid down her goblet, let fall her dress, and stood before him with dignity.

"Just let me understand you," she said. "It is time I should, as we shall both be in this place for some time. To begin, sir, I am not afraid of you. No, not one bit." There was a curious defiance in her tone that "took him back." "No. Not one bit," she went on. "I know what you have been about since I came here; your unkind and secret tricks to destroy a poor girl whom a good family wished to assist

and be friends to. What have I done to you? Do I interfere with you? Am I in the way of your designs? Say so. Why are you always slandering me? Don't be afraid. Tell me the truth."

"I am not afraid," he said, bluntly. "But I am not slandering you. Since you ask me to tell you the truth, I *am* anxious about a dear and good family."

"Whom you have known how long, pray?" said Jenny.

"No matter," he said; "but for whom—if you ask me to tell you the truth—I do not think *you* are exactly the sort of companion—I mean, they know nothing of the world. They are gentle, unsuspecting, innocent—while——"

"While I am all the contrary; thank you very much," said Jenny. "I am not in the least angry. Well, now, let us look at the matter sensibly. Suppose I merit these compliments; suppose I have very little in the world; suppose that I like these people, who are kind to me, and Mr. Lepell, who has been specially kind, what course do you say I am to take? You are surely not

quixotic enough to expect all this abnegation and self-denial—that I am to withdraw—shut myself out from the goodness of those who like me—God knows I have not found many, and when I have so many enemies, I want all I can find—all for the sake of a Scotch gentleman who has taken a whim, and unto whom I am certainly under deep obligations? Come now, just explain all this!”

He was confused. He did not know what to say.

“You are very clever, Miss Bell. I really admire your cleverness.”

“Of course, you mean cunning. No matter,” she answered. “We are talking sensibly, you know. I say, any such course would be laughable. What I said in jest, as you thought, was quite true. We are enemies, and to be enemies.”

He looked at her again.

“You are cleverer than I am,” he said. “Now listen. Suppose it to be a whim—the whim of an old Scotchman, and a tolerably rich old Scotchman——”

“Well?” she said.

"Well," he went on: "and that I can give no distinct reasons for it beyond it's being a whim—the whim being that I want you to leave this family——"

"To *spare* them, I suppose?" said Jenny, smiling.

"To give them up, to go your own way, to leave this place—it sounds absurd—but it is my whim, recollect——"

"Well," said Jenny, puzzled, "but *why* should I do this? As I said before, why should I deprive myself of dear friends who like me——"

"I was coming to that," he said, hastily. "I am a rich old Scotchman, you know—that is, fairly rich—and——"

"Yes?" said she, curiously.

"Well," he said, "what you lose in one direction may be made up in another——"

Jenny shook her head.

"This is all an accident," she said. "It is unlikely that I should ever meet with others so good and kind as they are. No, no; there are no two Lepell families in the world——"

"Stuff!" said he, impatiently. "What I

mean is this: if you have had any advantages in view to be got from this family, I shall be ready to make it up to you satisfactorily. There——”

“Money?” said Jenny.

“Exactly——”

“Oh, *now* I understand! It is all quite of a piece,” she added, curtseying slowly. “*Now* I know what you think of me without any explanation. Ah! I have come very low indeed to be addressed in this way—to be bought off and *offered money* like any of the common persons here! Heaven help me! What have I done to be brought down to this degradation!”

“Ah, that is the way you turn, is it?” said he, in quite a fury. “Mighty clever, indeed!”

“You may boast of *your* cleverness in thus insulting a weak girl! Very well—it is all the better,” said she, half turning. “We shall now understand each other for the future. I tell you it was cruel, wanton, ungentlemanly——”

“I meant nothing,” said he, very angry; “you led me on artfully, and——”

"Did I?" said she, descending the steps. "Say anything you please; but expect nothing from me for the future. I shall keep no terms with you. I see I must protect myself in every way I can. Do your best, and do your worst—it is all one to me. Now," said Jenny, suddenly changing into her sweetest of tones, "will you let me go and take my noonday draught?"

She bowed to him and left him. He beat the flags impatiently with his stick.

"What a creature!" he said to himself, "and what a fool I was! But I am glad I did it, for I now see what she is. Now I have no scruple."

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

FRESH ARRIVALS.

THAT evening was rainy. The "Harmonie" played in the great white ball-room. All the company sat round on the crimson velvet sofas, reading and working and chatting. Jenny was sitting with her two young friends, one each side of her, and they were talking in the mysterious way that ladies love to talk when they get together. Mr. Tulloch came in at the far end, and, looking round, saw them together, and stopped with an impatient gesture. He then got a chair and sat down near one of his Scotch friends. Soon Mr. Lepell came in, with his old absent, half melancholy man-

ner, walked over to his daughters, and sat down.

"Has Mr. Tulloch been with you, dears?"

Jenny answered for them.

"No, sir; and I don't think he will come here—at least so long as I am with you; and yet it was not my fault."

"What has happened, dear Jenny?" they said, noting her agitation.

"No, it was not my fault. You know, sir, what I always told you about him. Well, it was *proved* to-day beyond mistake."

"I don't credit it yet," said he, smiling; "but tell me what it was."

"Another time, sir," said Jenny, glancing at them.

Mr. Lepell sat silent for a few moments. Presently one of his daughters got up, beckoned over by some lady. Then Mr. Lepell rose.

"Come, Miss Bell," he said, "I want to show you the new player. Helen, will you wait for us and keep our places? Now," said he, as they got to a distance, "what is this? You know I am to be your friend

and adviser, and am to know everything."

"I did not wish," said Jenny, sadly, "to say anything before *them*. He worships the ground they tread on, and they like *him*; but, sir, I have no right to conceal it from you—why should I? I shall tell you. He dared to carry his dislike to me so far as to offer *me money* to go away, as if I were one of the vile things that flaunt about here, and was to be bought off! Oh, sir!"

She then told him the whole in detail. He tried to soothe her.

"If I thought, indeed," went on Jenny, "it was truly for *your* interest, what could I say? I should *admire* him—I could put up with it; but how can I think so! I suppose he thinks I *interfere* with him——"

"Oh, hardly!" said Mr. Lepell; "at least, I think not. Offer you money to go away! What could he be dreaming of! Are you sure?"

"Interest for you, of course," said Jenny, mysteriously. "Let it be so, then, with all my heart! Only let him cease to harass me. He began it at the beginning with his inti-

midation. I was *not* to be intimidated. He found that, and then he comes with his *money*—money to *me*! What does he take me for? What have I done? Oh, sir, save me from these outrages in future—speak to him, do! You are my only friend!”

This grief and agitation lent a fresh charm to Jenny’s face. Her cheek flushed, and her figure trembled. Mr. Lepell looked at the friendless girl who thus sought his help, with strange compassion and interest.

“Your daughters have sent me,” said a cheery voice behind, “to say they are going into the garden. Will you go with them? Oh!——” He saw Miss Bell. There was a silence for a moment.

“Candour above everything,” said Mr. Lepell. “We have been just speaking of you, Mr. Tulloch. Miss Bell has told me something, and—and I think—I hope—there must be some mistake——”

“Yes,” said Jenny, looking at him steadfastly, “I thought it my duty; I am very glad it has come to this. Let it all be cleared

up, now and for ever. Here is a judge. You, sir, can be impartial. Let there be an end of this stabbing in the dark. And now I ask Mr. Tulloch—openly and fearlessly—what he has against me?”

Utterly confounded and taken back at this bold defiance, Mr. Tulloch could not answer. At last he said :

“I say nothing, now; it would be no use; you are far too clever for me, madam.”

“Listen to him! What do you think now, sir?” said she, trembling with agitation; “is *that* honourable or chivalrous—is that what you would expect?”

“I *must* say,” said Mr. Lepell, growing excited himself, “it is not. I *am* a little surprised. I must ask Mr. Tulloch——”

“Hush! hush!” said the other, hastily; “what can I say more? I don’t want to quarrel with anybody. I suppose I have been mistaken—carried away by friendship.”

“Then,” said Mr. Lepell, warmly, “if you refer it to me, you owe some amends to Miss Bell—a full withdrawal and apology. She is certainly entitled to it.”

"I can't say more than I have done," said Mr. Tulloch, coldly. "I suppose I must have been mistaken, and—if I am wrong—am sorry."

"That," said Mr. Lepell, excitedly, "is scarcely the *amende* that I should——"

"It is quite enough," said Jenny, hurriedly; "more than I expect—indeed, more than I want. Mr. Tulloch has said quite enough. There——"

"Ah! you see," said Mr. Tulloch, "Miss Bell understands me."

"Yes," said Jenny, "we understand each other. There!"

Mr. Lepell looked reproachfully at Mr. Tulloch, but said nothing. The girls came running to them.

"We came to look for you, dear papa! We have been waiting for you. Come, Mr. Tulloch!"

Mr. Tulloch stood irresolute—looking at them doubtfully. Mr. Lepell understood him perfectly. .

"Won't you come?" he said, in a kind voice. "You won't desert the girls?"

"Look, look, papa!" they said, suddenly.

A sort of fashionable procession was entering the room. Two ladies, in three-cornered hats of the Louis Quatorze period, attended by gentlemen—one tall and handsome—the whole evidently having "the air of swells," as it was remarked by some of the younger spectators. The way in which they looked round—the sort of half-inquiry, half-indifference—showed that they were new arrivals, who had visited the Rooms for the first time. The ladies were all in blue and pink, in the very genteelest extravagance of fashion.

"Why, papa!" said the elder girl; "Helen! It is Mrs. Long! Don't you see?"

It was Mrs. Long and all her elegant cavalcade—the fashionable young-married Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Ellis (Alfred Ellis was the tall, handsome, ornamental husband), and Harold Smith, whose wife never travelled at all and always lived at home—and the hearty young Lord Kanturk. This was the "set" who kept together, and as they travelled lived in an elegant quarantine, and now stood together in a group in the centre

of the crowd, with a deliciously perfect indifference, just as if they were quite alone there.

Jenny had seen this strange entry and the strange costumes, but she had not heard the name Miss Lepell had mentioned; nor had she looked at their faces. She was thinking of other things. Suddenly she started; the face under the gaudy Louis Quatorze hat *à tricorne* was turned towards her. A real paleness came into her cheeks—she almost trembled. Even in this little happy valley she could not be secure, or left in peace. It was very hard.

The young girls, as was natural, did not for the moment think of the *past*—they were full of curiosity as to the motions of these finely-coloured birds of fashion. But Mr. Lepell, within whom was a rare union of delicacy and sensitiveness, understood what she felt perfectly.

“Courage!” he whispered; “don’t mind. You have more friends now than you had *then*!”

She gave him a look of unspeakable gratitude. Mr. Tulloch saw the whole, and

was a little mystified ; he then went away. When he was gone, Jenny said, hurriedly, to Mr. Lepell :

“ You will ask *them* not to tell *him* about what I suffered at that place—Penwillion—will ‘you not? *You* will understand why!”

“ Perfectly,” he said, eagerly ; “ depend upon me. You may, indeed ; he shall not know from them.”

“ It is dreadful,” said she, almost wringing her hands, “ to have to begin my little battle all over again. I am sick of life if it is to be all battle for me—which, indeed, it seems to be.”

Mrs. Long of Eaton had, indeed, come over. They had grown tired of the Welsh place. Mrs. Long had led the way ; the others followed in her wake. They had rather lounged over. Mr. Long had, it was believed, come too ; but no one knew, and no one much cared. He might have been “ registered through ” with the baggage. He did not even take on himself the duty of paying bills and taking places ; Mrs. Long did all that for herself—with, perhaps, the

aid of the tall, good-looking Alfred Ellis—"Lord Buckmaster's, you know"—a handsome hairdresser's image, who was an object of deep pity with every one, for having, in fact, thrown himself away by marrying a rather plain "creature," with money, who had loved him passionately, but who was quite hopeless in the matter of style. Still this faded woman, who had been an heiress, and had brought "lands," wore *her* hat à *tricorn*e, did her best to learn style, and panted after Mrs. Long and other women of fashion. The handsome husband, however, affected to be an admirer of Mrs. Long's—lounge and languish all day long with that lady; and, to say the truth, "endured" the plain creature, who *would* be of their parties, with great good nature and toleration.

Mrs. Long and her coterie almost at once fell into the same position she had occupied at Penwillion. The hat à *tricorn*e of these ladies, their blue and pink, and fluttering laces, excited astonishment and curiosity for the first day; but their ease and perfect confidence in themselves, and their

utter indifference to the whole colony, soon excited a piquant interest: and it was felt that they represented everything that was refined and elegant. Something seemed always to be going on among them—something private and stirring; there was a secret understanding which the outside world would have given anything to have shared in. Therefore, when Mrs. Long, sitting in the little encampment of chairs, with the stupid but handsome Ellis at her feet, had asked, languidly, “What was this ball the people here were talking of?” it came almost as of course into her hands, and she almost unconsciously assumed direction of the whole.

Doctor Fersen, the semi-English doctor, alone was allowed to be intimate with this select circle. The link between them was his having known and attended Lady Monboddo and others of their friends. He was pleasant, and amusing, and deferential. They were even obsequious to him.

That night the company pouring in from the twinkling “Wauxhall” gardens, and

passing through the gaming-rooms, saw the distinguished party standing at the tables, and with the hats *à tricorne*—low down, and near the table. Mrs. Long of Eaton was actually sitting down to the game with her handkerchief and dainty porte-monnaie—all the *matériel* laid out beside her. Her fair delicate chin rested on the back of her ringed hand as she made her calculations. A gracious croupier, with officious rake, took care to convey her little bit of gold neatly to the square she wanted. Behind, the noisy party, standing up—laughing with delight over their little winnings—played briskly. Harold Smith played thoughtfully with two little pieces of gold. The handsome Ellis, his foolish features composed to a wise gravity, jingled his few silver pieces one over the other, and played them with a miserable caution. Mr. Long of Eaton, whose gold pieces were in Mrs. Long's porte-monnaie, might be away anywhere in the new room—in the gardens—in bed. It made no great matter. Mr. Monkhouse, in his eternal grey livery, was stand-

ing beside Harris, Lord Kanturk's brother. (The men of the party knew him. He was at his old song.)

"That's right—give it to 'em! Take it out of 'em! You should have seen me here last year; I made 'em shell out! They didn't want to, the scoundrels, but I made 'em. I'll give 'em a lesson before I leave the place! Look at that Jew feller from Frankfort—a baron he calls himself—one of their twopenny-halfpenny creatures—he's been squeezing them all day long. Look, I say! There he goes again! Every one of those notes mille frong! Damn 'em! Serve 'em right! I'll go at 'em now! Watch how I pay 'em off! Here, change this, will you, vouley-vous. Gold."

The croupier gave him his change in the same blunt way that it had been asked for. Mr. Monkhouse and his personal feelings towards the bank were quite well known among these gentlemen. He put down his "five louis."

"See that!" he said, as five more were tossed over to it. "I know how to give it to 'em! Cinq louis," he called out. But

this time the rake contemptuously chinked out five of the pieces and drew them away. Mr. Monkhouse's raw red jaws were seen working up and down with anger, and his feet treading up and down. "Look at em!" he said; "only their own money. That's the way these swindlers win! Cinq louis!"

Again the rake took away the gold, and left Mr. Monkhouse's red jaws moving, and perhaps imprecating to himself.

"Not doing so well, old fellow?" said Lord Kanturk's brother. "I *am* making it pay, you see."

"Damned set of swindlers! They'll not trick me! Here!" and he rolled down a white paper rouleau like a wax-candle end. "Dee louis out of that."

The next moment the croupier had tossed the candle-end into the money-bowl and had counted out "the change," or balance, to the imprecating Englishman. He gathered it up into his hand with fury, and poured it into his pocket and walked away. To the door even his heavy red jaws kept working and his foot stamping with rage.

A little party were watching this curious scene. A good many more, too, were looking on. The hat *à tricorne*, excited curiosity. The two gentle girls both stood and looked on with wondering eyes, deeply interested, yet a little terrified. Jenny was a little near-sighted, and had a little eyeglass, which she did not find for a time. "What an odd dress, my dear," she whispered to Lucy; "such a strange hat! Who is it?"

She then got nearer, and, with her glass out at last, saw who it was.

Mrs. Long, with her chin still on the back of her hand, and looking round a little absently, saw Jenny almost at the same moment. She gave a little start. It was more a starting of the little muscles about the eyes, and she turned round and languidly whispered to those who were behind her, motioning towards Jenny. On the faces behind came curious smiles and expressions of curiosity, and Jenny saw that the whole of her "little story" had been told before now to the party, and that she was being pointed out—and not with favour

—as the heroine of it. No wonder that she gave one of her little “stamps.” Her life, indeed, seemed destined to be but one trouble after the other.

Mr. Monkhouse had walked away in a fury. A couple of hours later, when the ladies and “swells” had all gone, and only the “ruck” of mere business gamblers remained, he had come back again and stood at the bottom of the table jingling his money in his pocket, and looking on with disdain. He saw the mournful Mr. Lepell studying the table, as he was fond of doing; now again putting down a piece in an experimental way, and appearing to win. He himself presently took out his regular five louis, and began to play. He won—lost—won again; won again—then was to get all back by yet one more coup, when he lost. He turned round with a furious jerk, and stamped out of the room, slamming the glass door behind him, till he went near to smashing the panes. There was no one on the stairs, and his execrations against these swindlers were very loud and unrestrained. The “swindlers” seemed to be getting gra-

dually from him all that he had got from them the last years. Before he had got half way down the street he met a friend.

“Well, Monkhouse,” cried the friend, “at them again? What did you get out of them to-night?”

Again the other broke out with his favourite “swindlers” and “ruffians,” adding, that he “could give ’em a lesson,” if he chose!

“Come back, then,” said the friend; “I’m going to have at them too. Come along.”

Mr. Monkhouse hesitated a little, then turned round and went in.

Next morning, at breakfast, the head waiter, Adolph, was telling the guests with whom he was upon intimate terms, how that “Mistère Monkhouse” had returned late the night before, and had nearly broken the bell, he pulled it so furiously, had gone stamping and swearing up to bed, and had awoken all the gallery in which his room was by the violence with which he banged his door. And Adolph lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven as he told the story. “They

say he has lost thirty thousand francs," added the head waiter, with a smile of great relish. Someway the news was very much enjoyed in the establishment ; for the gaunt figure and the sulky hanging jaw, and the surly grumble of Mr. Monkhouse, were well known to every guest, and heartily disliked.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

“A SET” AGAINST JENNY.

SEVERAL days passed by. The watering-place life went on. The watering-place world was now looking forward to the great ladies' ball, which was drawing near. “Administration” gave one every Saturday night, finding lights and flowers and music, and the ladies would do little more than this, adding some light refreshment. But Administration could not supply the exclusiveness, the selectness, the battling to get into that reserved garden of Eden, at whose gate sat Mrs. Long of Eaton, connected, as we all know, so nearly with the Marquis of —.

The whole charm was to lie in this very

exclusiveness; and those who were allowed to go, were glad to go because others were prevented. Mrs. Long of Eaton, to whom the presidency of the fashionable council was delegated, sat every day, and decided upon claims. She was assisted by her gentlemen friends—and they had the pleasantest little meetings in the world—“doing business,” as Mr. Smith called it, and greatly amused by reading over the letters that were addressed to them. Outside, Mrs. Long said, in a sweet flutey voice, “We are obliged to be very, *very* cautious, you know. The place is literally full of such strange creatures. Of course we come here for our health, and must put up with those ‘things’ in the paint and dresses that we meet in the walks and places.” (Mrs. Long used these loose, general words a good deal.) “But when it comes to invitations, it is a different thing altogether.”

The two girls thought wistfully of the coming festival. They were anxious to go; but they knew that since their family affliction they had never been to any amusement of the kind. They knew that even the pro-

posal would be a shock to him ; but there was a special reason why they wished to be there. Charles Russell was to be back in time for it. He loved everything that was select and correct ; and though he might have even disliked a ball, he always would take care to be present where the rest of the world ought to be present. But they thought that the idea would “jar” upon their father.

A day or so before it came round, Young Brett came up to them, and with his blunt gaiety said to them, “You have ordered your dresses, of course. Poor Fleury, the one milliner of the place, is at her wits’ end.”

Mr. Lepell was sitting with them abstractedly, reading a French paper, or appearing to read. He looked up with a genial and friendly smile at the sound of Brett’s voice. He knew that the young officer was sound and true in every way. “What ! are you anxious about ladies’ dresses ?” he asked, smiling ; “though, indeed——” Then his eyes fell upon his daughters’ black silks, and he stopped himself. Young Brett saw that there was something painful, and hastily tried to explain.

“I didn’t mean *that*,” he said. “That is—there’s a ball coming on, and I thought the young ladies might be going——”

Mr. Lepell answered, “Oh, they have that every Saturday. You said, dears, you would never care——”

“Ah, but this is a very different thing,” Young Brett went on, eagerly. He was very sharp at little domestic signs. “This is a select affair. The great ladies’ ball. Only for the swells and nice people.”

“Then wouldn’t you go, dears?” said he, eagerly. “Oh, you must. Indeed, it is time you should have a little amusement. I have kept you shut up long enough. Won’t you go?”

“Oh, papa,” they said, looking at him with eyes of delight. “Charles will be here for it, and we might go together.”

“But,” said he, doubtfully, “if it is so select, and we know none of these great people——”

“Oh, that wouldn’t be difficult,” said the young man, joyfully—“at least, not *very* difficult. I am so glad. I know you will. I know Ellis is not at all a bad fellow, and

I shall get—let me see—four tickets from him.”

“ Ah, yes; one for Charles,” said the second girl.

“ But,” said Mr. Lepell, looking down at his *Galignani*, “ there is your friend, dears, besides. She is staying with you, you know——”

“ Ah, Jenny, to be sure,” they said, with self-reproach.

“ Oh, Miss Bell, to be sure,” said Young Brett. “ I can ask for her, too. Leave it to me; I’ll make it all right.”

“ Though, indeed, four,” said Mr. Lepell, hesitatingly, “ would be sufficient. What have I to do with balls? and Miss Bell can have my ticket.”

They both almost hung about him affectionately. He must—they had set their hearts on it. They should not go. They would not enjoy it. They could all go together.

Away went Young Brett, bounding; he was always delighted when he had a mission of good nature entrusted to him. An hour after, they saw him out in the

walks, but they wondered he did not come to them, for he said that he would return to them straight, with the tickets. Jenny was sitting with them at her “little work.” They had told her, with exuberance, what was in store for her.

“A ball!” she had said, shrinking away from it. “A ball, for me! Oh no, dears. What should I do there? But all the same to you, dears—*just* the same—a million of thanks for the *wish*!”

“You *must* go,” said Mr. Lepell, kindly. “Recollect, you are under authority now—at least, for some time—and must learn. It is decreed that you must go. Seriously, Miss Bell, you must make up your mind to mix a little more with the world. You owe it to yourself,—you do, indeed. Indeed, if it were asked what business have I there——”

There was a little restraint between Mr. Lepell and his Scotch friend, Tulloch, after that remonstrance on the score of Jenny. He did not come to their arbour that evening; but as they sat there they saw a fine procession sweep past, consisting of Mrs. Long and her party, who had come

to try the table d'hôte of that hotel, with a train of gentlemen, among whom, to their astonishment, was Mr. Tulloch.

It has been mentioned that by the republican system of manners at such places, there fall out unexpected companionships, and even friendships arise. On one of those fitful waves had Mr. Tulloch been drifted up beside the grand lady arbitress of the place.

Jenny smiled. "Mr. Tulloch has the knack of getting on in the world. If he would only teach it to me!"

Presently they went on to the Promenade. There, Young Brett, who had been watching at a distance until he saw the three ladies walking on in front, came hastily to Mr. Lepell.

"I have got the vouchers," he said, with some embarrassment; "that is, four of them."

"Ah!" said the other, smiling; "I see! None for old *passé* gentlemen like me. Well, I must only stay at home, with a book."

"Why so?" said Young Brett, in almost a distress of embarrassment. "Not exactly

that. I got yours; but they would only give me two ladies' vouchers.”

Mr. Lepell stopped :

“What—what can they mean? No more ladies' tickets?”

“No,” said Young Brett; “and really I am so distressed, I don't know how to tell—and it seems to me a great shame in a place like this—but—but the fact is,” and he dropped his voice, “they have got some objection to your friend, Miss Bell——”

“*Some* objection!” said Mr. Lepell, starting. “Who has?”

“Well,” Young Brett continued, still in deep distress, “Mr. Tulloch says it is Mrs. Long, who has picked up some story——”

“Ah! quite enough!” said the other, interrupting him; “now I see it all. It is quite explained. And they talk,” he added, with deep scorn, “of their English fair play. Is it fair play, or open or manly play, to be hunting a poor girl to death? I always thought the world bad enough; but I declare to you, Mr. Brett, it seemed to me far better than I have found it.”

“They told me nothing,” said Young

Brett, eagerly ; “ on my word, no,—so I am all in the dark. But it is shabby, as you say, to be joining against a girl. It is unworthy of men !”

“ Ah ! to *you* it does,” said Mr. Lepell ; “ but there are others who think it not beneath them. No matter,—not one shall go. As they treat her they shall treat us. I shall send them back their tickets.”

“ It is a shabby thing,” again said Young Brett, “ whatever she has done. But I would not send back the tickets ; it will make a fuss.”

“ Ah ! *they* should not make a fuss. The whole town here shall know the business.”

“ No, I wouldn’t send them back ; even for the sake of the young ladies. They have set their hearts upon going—they have indeed, sir. If you saw their faces when you said that they might go !”

Mr. Lepell’s face softened in a moment.

“ Poor children !” he said, “ they get so very little amusement.”

At this moment the two girls, with their friend, came running to him.

“ Ah ! you have got them, Mr. Brett.

How kind of you ! and what pretty things !
One—two—three—four.” They stopped.
“Only four?”

“There was a little difficulty about another,” said Young Brett, in great confusion ; “I tried all I could—I did, indeed.”

Mr. Lepell touched his arm lightly.

“It is nothing,” he said ; “it will all be settled, never fear. Leave it to me.”

Jenny listened, wondering, looking from one face to the other, then down at the tickets. Then sighed deeply, and turned away. When they had walked on again, she dropped softly behind, and came close to Mr. Lepell, and said to him :

“I have an instinct of what all this means. Don’t be afraid to tell me ! I have learned to look on you as my guardian and friend, and can bear to hear the worst from your lips.”

“Indeed you think too much of it,” said he ; “it is only some of the airs of these high people.”

“Ah ! my enemies again—is it not so ?—Never tired of the old work. I suppose it will go on in this way, sir, to the

end ; so I had better prepare myself. Oh, Heaven help me," she added, in a broken voice, putting her handkerchief to her face, " what have I done to deserve all this cruelty?—I only offer it up, and perhaps it may be accepted in place of other trials!"

Mr. Lepell drew down the hand from her face, and took it in his own. He was really deeply moved at her sorrows and sufferings.

"No," said he, " we must do *more* than that. After a certain point, mere patient suffering is thrown away and only taken advantage of. It is shameful ; we must not thus sit down under—I shall go myself. Leave it to me, Miss Bell."

This only filled her with consternation. It was enough that she should suffer herself, without dragging her friends down with her ; above all, not *he* who had already been her friend—her champion—*her defender, who would have risked his life for her honour !*

"Only another reason for standing by you now," he said, smiling. "Your case is in *my* hands ; I do not even allow you to

protest. Go back now to your two little friends, and leave it to me.”

She did so with a look of gratitude.

Mr. Lepell saw Lord Loveland “flourishing” to two gentlemen who were new to the place, and who were listening to him as if the place was Delphi and he were on a tripod, as he was saying, “Now, we take a place of this sort—well wooded, well watered—like a good nobleman’s place at home——”

“Lord Loveland, I beg your pardon—could I say a few words to you on a matter of importance?”

His lordship stopped suddenly. “Oh, Mr. Lepell! To be sure—to be sure! My time—*our* time—should be for the public. They may draw on me as on the bank. What are we put into that gorgeous gingerbread cage of ours, with the carved monsters, but for the public to come to us? If my two friends here will excuse me——”

Lord Loveland told this interview afterwards to Mrs. Long and to various friends of his. “I saw,” he said, “that he was a little—you know, wild and what-d’ye-call-it in his manner. His words were all—er

—that way ; and then he began : Why this ? —why that ? What did this mean and that mean ? ‘My good sir,’ I said, ‘let me make a few remarks in reply for our side’—which, by the way, Mrs. Long, I should call the ministerial—eh ? ‘What can I do ? What would you have me do ? Can I carry a measure of this sort through ? You see we cannot be too careful in a place of this sort. A breath—a speck—a whiff, you see ;—it makes all the difference. “A breath destroys ’em as a breath has made,” as the poet puts it. See, Lepell,’ I put it to him, ‘you are a man of the world ; you have met men, and that sort of thing. Now, you know, we *can’t* go into this sort of matter. We are trustees for the decencies of the place — *the cestuis qui trustees*,’ I added, recollecting a little of my old law. Well, my dear madam, can you conceive how the man accepted this temperate appeal ? Why, in the Oldham pauper case, which I was asked to take up, I just went in this way to Folijambe, who was Under-Secretary, and put it to him in that way. He met it at once

in the same way. ‘Withdraw your motion, Loveland,’ he said, ‘and we shall then see what can be done.’ I saw what he was at, and did so. What was the result? In three weeks five pounds odd was refunded to the ratepayers!”

Mrs. Long’s attention had wandered during the latter part of this narrative.

“But what did this person say? You were going to tell us——”

“Oh,” said Lord Loveland, “quite forgot himself—raised his voice, and all that kind of thing. ‘My good friend, don’t,’ I said to him, quite calmly; ‘if you take this tone, I can’t entertain you at all.’ Then he said something about this happening at home, and a jury and damages, upon which I bowed and left him.”

“Upon my word,” Mrs. Long said, looking round and smiling, “this is getting very pleasant and amusing. I wouldn’t that this had not happened for anything. It will be a little excitement for us. I really thought that these Lepells seemed nice people; the girls are tolerable, and might be made something. This creature, it is plain, is making

a fool of the father. He seems an infatuated poor soul. As for letting the woman in, we can't do it."

"Contents have it—eh?" his lordship said, smiling. "With all my heart—on my Honour—eh? Any proxies—eh? My dear Mrs. Long, you should be President of the Council."

Presently Mrs. Long and party were going out on the Promenade. They all wore rich rustling silks, fluttering ribbons, pinks and blues, and the hats *à tricorne*, trimmed with swansdown. They strode down the walk in a sort of military order, the hairdresser beau and Mrs. Long leading, the rest following, as it were, two and two. For them the music seemed to be playing a triumphant march. The French and the English, and the Germans and the Belgians, in their glistening white trousers, turned to look at them as they passed.

Then Queen Long of Eaton was solemnly enthroned in one of the chairs. The rest were about her for a time, and listened to her.

"We shall quite reform this little place," she

said. “ I consider I am doing a public duty. Of course I shall be set upon. I shouldn’t be surprised if it got into the *Court Journal*. They will back me up. But why they should take it up for that thing—that really low creature—whom even those vulgar Roundtowns wouldn’t take up — a kind of upper servant—half-companion, half-governess ? It is absurd ! ”

Lord Loveland was beside her.

“ You are good at a reply, Mrs. Long. I should not have liked to have had you against me in that Deserted Child question. I should have had to withdraw. No Under-Secretary coming to me then—— ”

“ The other persons of that sort, ” went on Mrs. Long, “ made no difficulty. There was that poor woman — what was her name ? — Mrs. Park Hacker. You know that *exposé* in Sir Cresswell’s time ? Well, she submitted at once. There was Mrs. Hodges—— ”

A soft, submissive voice was at Mrs. Long of Eaton’s ear.

“ Could you spare me a moment’s conversation, Mrs. Long, in private ? ”

It was Mr. Lepell.

She looked a little astonished. "Oh, certainly, Mr. Lepell!"

"Strangers to withdraw," said Lord Loveland, gaily; then, jingling his few thalers, he thought he would go up to the rooms and help Monkhouse to despoil the Company.

"Where are your daughters to-night, Mr. Lepell?" she said, for she was greatly pleased with herself. "They are such nice girls."

"They are gone towards the railway," said he. "But I wanted to speak to you, Mrs. Long, and I am sure you will excuse me. A most unfortunate thing has occurred about a ticket."

"I know it all," she said. "Some Miss Bell. I should like to oblige, but it is impossible."

"Hear me a moment," said Mr. Lepell, excitedly; "there is more in this than you think. You are branding an innocent young girl, just starting in life—holding her out as infamous—as not fit to associate with

nice people. Think of that, Mrs. Long ; it is a serious thing.”

“ I really can’t help it,” said she, smiling. “ As Lord Loveland says, we are trustees for public decency——”

“ And we are all trustees,” he went on, more excitedly, “ for the good name and fame and honour of those who are under our charge—of the helpless—of the weak—of the innocent—are we not, Mrs. Long ? ”

“ I think we are, Mr. Lepell,” she said, in a “ cozy ” way. “ I quite agree with you ; and for that reason I really wonder a little that you, who are a man of the world, would run such a risk and choose such a companion for those nice girls of yours ! Excuse my free speaking, but it really did astonish me.”

“ This is making it worse,” he said. “ I don’t believe a word of the vile slanders—nor do they. They join with me in this, and in their name, and in my own, we require this act of justice at your hands, Mrs. Long.”

“ Impossible,” she said, smiling ; “ I cannot go back.”

“Well, then,” said he, rising, “I have no more to say. The injustice be upon your own head; and let me say it is a responsibility that I would shrink from.”

“Oh! nonsense, Mr. Lepell!” she answered, sharply. “You are not going to preach to me—he! he!”

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

CHARLES RUSSELL.

HE walked away after his children down the road that led to the railway. He overtook them. The train had just come in. The blue-coated porters were wheeling up little trucks of luggage, the flocks of passengers were drifting towards the town, and the great wain, or omnibus, was jingling and rolling on its way to all the hotels, like a great Noah's ark on wheels. Every day, about this hour, the stream poured in.

As the omnibus passed them in a cloud of dust, a voice called out to them suddenly, and from the window a well-known face was looking out on them. There was no door,

and in a moment, without stopping the omnibus, a young man in a travelling dress, accoutred like a soldier, with a bag and straps across, had jumped out and had run up to them. It was Charles Russell, Lucy's intended husband.

This little surprise took place before their father had time to join them. He saw the happy group from a distance—even saw Russell holding both Lucy's hands in his. Then it flashed upon him.

"So glad to see you all again," said Russell, walking on with them. "And my little girl here, who, I dare say, has been amusing herself—taking advantage of my absence. Oh, I know what these places are very well."

"Indeed no," said she, justifying herself with great earnestness. "I thought you would *never* come. Rome is a charming place, is it not?"

Russell burst out into a laugh.

"How innocently she puts that!" he said. "Don't you see the reproach? No matter. And how do you get on here? What shows and amusements? You shall have

me with you now *in seculâ seculorum*, as they sing in Rome, until we go up the steps of a certain church in Hanover-square."

Lucy blushed and smiled with delight.

"Tell me about yourselves—about everything," he went on. He was in great spirits. "Where is this wonderful girl you have got hold of, and whose praises take up nearly every letter I get from you?"

"Oh, that is Jenny!" they both said together, with enthusiasm—"our Jenny."

"Miss Bell," said Mr. Lepell, "who has been left without any friends, and who, indeed, wants all the help and sympathy that can be given to her."

"Oh, I dare say!" he said, laughing. "There are lots that want *that*. Well, and what else does she require? Money, I dare say."

"Ah, Charles," said the younger, "when you *see* her you won't talk in that way of her!"

"Is she middle-aged?"

"No, Charles!" they said, laughing. "She is young, and nice-looking."

"My dear Russell," said Mr. Lepell, "you

find us all in a trouble about her. Some of the fine cruel ladies have made a set against her—want to hunt her down—because, I suppose, she wishes to do her duty.”

“But why *should* they hunt her down? What object,” said he, gravely, “could they have? In my experience of life I have always found that there is no smoke, you know——Well, and who is her arch-enemy—who leads the persecution?”

“Oh, a fashionable lady,” said Mr. Lepell, warming; “one of the cold, pitiless London women.”

“And where is she now?”

“Up there,” said Mr. Lepell, nodding towards the walk, “surrounded with her set, as she calls it. But, as you know her,” he added, anxiously, “you could do a great deal. You might help us. It seems almost providential your coming at this moment. You might easily come to the rescue of this poor girl in all her troubles——”

He looked at him wistfully. The two girls caught their father’s hands affectionately. Russell was puzzled.

“I shall do anything, of course,” he said;

"but she seems to have made a great impression on you all."

"Oh, she is charming, Charles!" said Lucy. "When you come to know her, you will rave of her!"

They were now at the entrance of the little town. The gay crowd began to thicken, and they heard the subdued buzz of distant music.

"There—there!" said the second girl—"there she is! She is looking for us. Do you see her?"

Jenny was, in effect, wandering here and there, looking anxiously. She had on her little straw hat. That very day she had put off her mourning, and the change of dress had given her quite a new air. She passed quite close to the chairs where Mrs. Long and her party were sitting, and she drew herself up without the least bravado or defiance, but with the true dignity of one who feels unjustly accused.

"Look!" said Mr. Lepell; "you saw *that*. Does not that speak volumes?"

"Here, Miss Bell; here is our friend, Mr. Russell, of whom you have heard us speak

so often, and he has promised to be *your* friend too."

Mr. Russell looked at her carefully from head to foot for a moment, and then said, dryly, "You have wonderful friends in *my* friends, it seems," he said.

Jenny looked round on them all, in a flutter—dropped her eyes upon the ground—could hardly speak. She seemed dreadfully afraid of this new comer; as, indeed, she told them afterwards she was.

"They are all too good to me," she said. "You have travelled a long way?" she asked, timidly. "Only just arrived?"

"No such great performance in the way of travelling," he answered, lightly; "only from Brussels. You can't transform me into a wayworn traveller. Come on, Lucy, in front; I have a hundred thousand things to tell you; and you can come too, Helen."

There was a reverential glance in Jenny's face, which was a little disturbed by this abruptness.

Mr. Lepell whispered her encouragingly. Charles was looking at Jenny from head to

foot—"taking her measure," as he was fond of doing with every one he met. "We who have to do the diplomacy of our country," he said, "must pass by none of these little arts; in a single moment we may find out a whole character."

He then walked away with the young girl on his arm to whom he had "a hundred thousand things to say."

"Who is that?" he asked. "I mean, what is your relation to her? You seem very intimate."

"She is a dear creature," said the young girl, looking upwards into his face with a glow of enthusiasm. "*Don't* you like her? We all love her so!"

He laughed.

"Let me see, now. I have formed no sudden prejudice against her. That is in her favour, for I get the most wonderful instincts and violent animosities on a first glance. She had a quiet, devotional manner, which I like in women, and which you have a good deal of——"

"Oh, Charles!" said Lucy, her face full of blushes.

"Let me see, now," he said. "You must set me right while I guess. An orphan,—eh?"

"Oh! exactly, Charles," said she, stopping, and coming almost in front of him, to look up to his face. "Not a relation in the wide world—not one! How wonderfully you know all these things!"

"No, I didn't say *that*," he answered. "It is very unusual; she must have some one. The thing can't be. Think a little."

"Ah! yes," said she, suddenly; "an aunt—a cruel aunt."

"Her father, an old, old friend of your father's—shall we say a general—a needy general—wrote him a letter on his death-bed. Your father—gentle, generous soul as he is—sent funds privately to have her brought up."

"No, no, no!" said Lucy, eagerly; half seriously, half smilingly. "We don't know her so long ago as that—not nearly."

She stopped now.

"You don't mean to say you picked her up *here*—in *this* place?"

"No dear, no," said the young girl, frightened.

"How long ago, then?"

"Oh, at the—the other place," she said, hesitating.

"I see," he said, slowly. "So I see it comes to this—she is a chance acquaintance that you have taken a fancy to, met at a table d'hôte."

"Ah! I see you are not going to like her," said she, sorrowfully; "you will condemn her. Exactly as she said herself. Oh, if you only knew how frightened she has been about your coming. And I saw her looking at you so timidly when you spoke——"

"My dear child," said he, "I dare say she is everything that is good, and worthy of being liked; only I like to know my ground, you see. Now let us talk about your little self. How is the delicacy? That small little chest!—I hope you have been making it tough and strong!"

When the bell at the hotel was clanging furiously for dressing, and the guests drop-

ping in from long walks and easy loungings, and the slam of many doors was being heard, young Lucy, with her face all in a brown glow, came bounding to Jenny's white door, and flew up to her. She whispered to her (though there was no one by) :

"He likes you, dearest; don't be afraid. I have found it all out from him. He told me so. His very words were, that he had no prejudice against you, though he had against almost every one at first. There, dear!"

Jenny's eye wandered upwards with deep gratefulness—very slowly—to the stucco rosette in the ceiling; as if that was the special seat of Providence.

"How good!" she said. "I don't deserve this. It is a load off my mind. And oh, dearest!" she whispered, squeezing her friend's hand, and speaking in a sort of gasp of rapture, "how noble, how handsome, like"—and Jenny's eyes dropped again to the ground—"like the angel Gabriel!"

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

JENNY'S TRIALS.

DURING that dressing quarter of an hour Miss Bell sat, for a few moments, pensively before her glass; then roused herself, smoothed down her hair, absently, and turned to a plain grey silk which lay on a bed beside her. After a little reflection, she went to her box and got out a fresh muslin—never worn—decorated with neat scarlet edgings, under her own personal superintendence; laid it out on the bed, gazed at it with deep thought, and finally turned away, as it were, satisfied.

Soon the bell rang again; and the clattering and locking of doors, and the brisk

tramping of the bold English, set in. And the usual ceremonial of the table d'hôte—which never palled—began.

From her pensiveness and abstraction, Jenny did not arrive until late—at what a lively young Englishman used to call “half-past soup,” or “three-quarters past fish,” as the case might be. The Lepells—a substantial family, worthy of all hotel esteem and consideration—had been moved up, slowly, to the top of the table—the Loveland quarter—never to be disturbed from there. And to a little gap between Mr. Lepell and one of his daughters, came floating up a mist of soft muslin—an airy cloud, out of which beamed the brilliant face of Jenny—brilliant, certainly, in eyes, hair, and cheeks. She was under escort, as it were, of the landlord, who seemed to make a salute by holding the back of the chair until she sat down.

Opposite her was Russell, in great spirits, talking across the table, and even down the table. Lucy next to him, listening with pride.

Lord Loveland, helping himself to salad over his own shoulder, was listening with

an approbative air. He had very soon made himself known.

"Mr. Russell," he said, "I remember it as well as if it were this day week, meeting the general at old Sir Charles Wildair's—a fine specimen of the grey old soldier, of which our army, thank God, boasts many. I sat but two away from him. I had only just got into the Upper House *then*. But he may have incidentally mentioned that night to you.—Loveland, you know. *At* that very dinner, old Wildair was asking me about a question which I was about bringing on before our House, and which it was really thought would have embarrassed the Government seriously—and I remarked your father listening very attentively. He could tell you the whole story—ask him now. So——"

"My father has been dead some years, Lord Loveland," said Russell, calmly. "I have heard him mention Sir Charles Wildair very often."

"I thought so," Lord Loveland answered, looking round. "There is something what-you-call-'em in this sort of thing. A little incident of this kind makes us think better

of life, and of man—and of women. Here, now, we meet at a dinner years ago—I and my old friend. Well, he goes his way—I go mine. He to his duty—to fight for British homes and beauty (one of the grandest songs we have, Miss Lucy Lepell—but you never heard Braham!)—I to get swallowed up in their Ministerials and Oppositions, and the rest of the business (shall we say their humbugs, Miss Bell?); but you must not tell of me to the President or the Foreign Sec., or you will get me into a scrape!”

He had scarcely ever spoken to Jenny before. But he had marked on previous occasions—and marked with approbation—both in the arbour and other places where he addressed his audience, an undistracted attention, and an absorbed interest in all that he said. Other listeners wandered—some walked away. She was always steadily and respectfully interested. Even now she had half laid down her fork at this allusion to the greater beings of the Upper House.

“It was very curious,” said Lord Loveland—(“Now, what do you call this, Or-

gooste?" he added, stirring a new entrée suspiciously)—"It was very curious that when I was bringing on a matter that almost concerned the empire, and had actually given notice, they sent round to me, through one of their jackals—a fellow we all know—to get the thing cushioned. It was about a pauper, sir; and, I suppose," added his lordship, "about as curious a point as was ever raised in the whole of English history. Well, upon my word and honour, I believe I could trace the whole thing to the President. I knew him very little—indeed, not at all—may say I never spoke to him in my life; but he always looked awkward when we met."

Jenny's eyes moved slowly round the faces of all the party, and there was a smile of admiration in her face.

"What a thing it is to be *clever*!" she said, half aloud. Lord Loveland heard it.

"I rather plume myself upon it," he said. "It isn't every one who can stand up, single-handed, against a Government, with all their jackals and satellites at their back."

Mr. Russell had been looking at Jenny's motions with great curiosity. With a kind of twinkle in his eye, he said :

"So you brought on your pauper—beat them—and got your returns!"

Lord Loveland laughed.

"Ah! our young friend," he said, plaintively, "is all for flying colours, drum-beating, and that sort of thing. While we are for the solids, he is for the show. There is youth for you! *Adolescens semper.*"

"I am very curious about this," said Russell, with the same comic twinkle. "You know these settlement cases are beginning to excite attention; besides, I am a new arrival. Let me see—you brought in your motion, or bill—well, the Government, of course, opposed——"

"No, no, no," said his lordship, plaintively, and waving it off as if it were too sad a story to be revived. "It is a very long story—wheels within wheels, you know. When our young friend gets into the House he will find we can't push things through in that express way."

"I must look up Hansard," said Mr.

Russell, a little maliciously, "when I get back. I am dying to know about your pauper——"

"But why, dear Charles?" said Lucy, earnestly. "What can you care?"

He looked round all their faces. They all showed a little wonder. But in the bright face of Jenny, and in the brighter eyes, he saw a sparkling twinkle of good-humoured intelligence. He looked again at her, and was pleased.

At that moment a rather obstreperous burst of polite vivacity was borne up the table—a rather shrill chorus of ladies in very good spirits.

"We are getting on down there," said Mr. Russell, stooping forward to get a "good look." "Every one is cheerful at these sort of places. Who on earth is that? Good gracious! I should know her face! To be sure! Mrs. Long! To think of her turning up here!"

There was a sudden silence all about him. All faces were turned towards their plates, except that of Lord Loveland, who made some remark about "the Longs of Long

Hall." Mr. Russell looked at them a little perplexed.

"You know her, I suppose?" he said.
"Everybody knows everybody here."

No one, however, spoke, except, once more, Lord Loveland.

"Yes! One of the drawbacks of this place. A little too much of the hail fellow well met thing, you know."

"Good gracious! how little altered!" said Russell, still looking down. "Wonderful woman! She *has* seen a little life. You all of course know her?"

"A little," said Mr. Lepell, eagerly and nervously, changing the subject. "Did you come by the express?"

Greatly puzzled, Mr. Russell looked over at Jenny, who had understood so well recently. Her face was very pale, and she was biting her lip very hard, as in pain.

"What *on earth* is it?" he said. "No harm to allude to her *now*; that Florence business is all over now. So she's a 'swell' here? Good gracious! Why, I could at this moment—What *is* it?"

Jenny's handkerchief was up.

"For Heaven's sake, stop, Charles!" whispered Mr. Lepell. "I *told* you, you know——"

But at the next moment Jenny had risen, pushed back her chair, and had fluttered away from the room, guests looking after her in mysterious wonder how any one could be willing to forswear the dinner joys that yet remained to be tasted.

"You are all a set of riddles," said Mr. Russell, impatiently. "But I see, now. That was very dramatic, that exit."

Mr. Lepell had half risen, and had not heard.

"Another trouble for her, poor girl!" and he looked wistfully at his daughters.

Helen rose at once.

"I shall go, dearest papa," she said.

"Ah, yes, dear," he said, sitting down again; "the very thing." And Helen fluttered down the room after her friend. "Good girl!" said her father; "so thoughtful."

"Most thoughtful indeed," said Russell. "I don't keep up with the business at all. Your friend seems to suffer wonderfully."

Mr. Lepell smiled.

"Ah, you don't know her story," he said. "Her life could be written, and make, I believe, the most exciting novel of our day. The troubles and persecutions that she has borne ever since we have known her, would have crushed any one else, only that she has the stoutest heart in the world—the bravest spirit. These dear girls do what they can to help her."

"No doubt—no doubt," said Mr. Russell. "I give her all credit. Now you must taste this 'Château neuf du Pape,' and drink to the confusion of all her persecutors."

"Ah, Charles," said Lucy, sorrowfully, "if you only knew her as we do, how you would like her!"

"Like her!" he said, sharply. "No; I can answer for *that*, even now. I have been the round of the Legations, recollect, and see some thousand women every year, just as I look at some hundreds of novels every year; the first page is often enough for me. So you see——"

At the end of dinner came the usual

breaking up; the balmy night—the faint presence of the stars through the early twilight—the passage of the guests—the clustering of the dined at the doors and on the steps. The night was presently to begin, and the happy English, chinking, with a sort of child's relish, the few silver pieces they had won in the daytime, were eager to be back again at the scene of their triumphs. Mr. Lepell and Russell stood together on the steps—Russell watching the people pass out. The girls had gone for their "hats." Mr. Lepell's face was restless and troubled. "I hope that poor girl is well," he said, looking wistfully up the stairs. "Good gracious!" he added, half to himself, "the sense of being utterly alone in the world, with no one to look to—does it not make you miserable to think of it! God preserve to me those dear things of mine!"

"Now, look here," said Russell, taking out his "case;" "let us have a turn round the gardens. You don't mean to say that you believe in that bit of acting we had at dinner to-day?"

"Acting!" said Mr. Lepell, flushing. "No, no! As I told you, you don't know her—at least, not as *we* do——"

"Perhaps not," said the other; "but I do plenty of her class. It is almost a profession. Mind, I say nothing against her; but one should be cautious at these places, you know, if only for the sake of our girls——"

"Why, they worship her!"

"Mind, I prejudge nothing. I shall look into the matter for myself—merely out of curiosity. I like such researches—it comes in the way of our profession."

"We would ask nothing better," said Mr. Lepell, warmly. "The more she is looked into, the more triumphantly will she come out of the ordeal."

They had come round to the door again.

"Hush—here she is!" said Mr. Lepell; and there was she of whom they had been talking, drawing near to them softly, with her eyes cast down, overwhelmed with confusion, and waiting for judgment.

She came up to the two gentlemen.

"I am so ashamed!" she said. "Oh, I

could sink down and die! Dear sir, what must you—they—have thought of me! But I could not have stayed another moment——”

“Quite natural,” said Mr. Lepell, encouragingly. “No one thinks a bit the worse of you for a little natural feeling. God knows, in these days, it is scarce enough!”

“I know what was passing in the minds of many,” she went on, softly, “at that exhibition. Some, of course, said it was a bit of theatrical effect—melodrama, and all that. I saw it in their faces—I did indeed. But I must train myself not to be sensitive. What business have I with such costly things?”

“Don’t be afraid,” said Mr. Lepell, warmly; “you will triumph yet, and baffle them all. I have no fears for you.”

“Oh, what encouragement this is!” she said, gratefully. “I feel tempted to brave everything!”

Mr. Russell was smoking placidly.

“A large programme, that,” he said, carelessly. “What is keeping the young ladies?”

There was an impatient little stamp upon the step, and, looking round, Mr. Russell saw Jenny biting her lip, and moving the small round foot that had given the stamp, very impatiently. ("The attitude," he thought to himself, "struck by our adventuress, has broken down, and she is showing her temper.")

Suddenly Mr. Lepell started. "Let us go," he said; "let us walk round the garden. Quick!—it is getting so cold!"

The sound of obstreperous voices came from inside the hall, and the din of genteel laughter. It was a chorus of sharp ladies' tongues; dresses were rustling in time, and men's obsequious laughter came in and furnished a bass to the choir. Jenny raised her head quickly; she knew the voice that led.

Mr. Russell saw a flash in her eyes. She folded her arms across her waist and drew herself up.

"No," she said, "Mr. Lepell—no walk round the garden. I see your kindness and delicacy, but I shall not stir. I have nothing to be afraid of."

The bright colour came pouring into her cheeks, and she shook her head defiantly, as though she had curls.

Mr. Russell took his cigar from his lips, and looked at her with real curiosity.

The voices came closer. Mrs. Long, in blue silk and a white cloak, and the hat à *tricorn*e, was in advance of her cohort. The "set" followed behind. She came full on Jenny and drew back, tossing a short meaning look at the "set."

Miss Bell, whose eyes had been on the ground, "recovered" herself, flashed out on her a bold defiance, and really, without rudeness or vulgarity (though the "set" afterwards talked of her as "a low creature"), made the fashionable lady quail under her calm, steady gaze.

"I fear nothing," said Jenny, calmly, as if she were continuing a conversation, "so long as I have dear friends of *known worth*, *honour*, and *name*, whose character is above a breath of suspicion, to stand by me!"

Russell now came forward.

"Mrs. Long," he said, "you remember me—Charles Russell——"

The lady in the three-cornered hat turned a little pale; she even faltered.

"Oh, Mr. Russell—you here!"

"Yes," said he, "I turn up everywhere. Just come from Rome; been the whole circuit—Florence, and the rest of it——"

Mrs. Long looked round in trouble. Her "set" had closed up about her. She nodded the point of the hat *à tricorne* at him.

"We shall see you at the Rooms, of course," she said; and passed on hurriedly.

There was a pause for a moment. Mr. Russell began at his cigar again.

"You did that well, Miss Bell," he said; "showed courage and presence of mind."

"*Did* she not!" said Mr. Lepell, his gentle eyes lighting and warming with sympathy. "I admired your resolution. I could not have done it."

"How good of you to say so!" she answered, softly. "And yet, shall I confess, it is only put on? *Now* I am as weak and as cowardly as a child!"

"Goodness! When I think of Mrs. Long and a little secret page of Florentine history!——I dare say she though tit was torn

up long ago, and no such man in the world as Count Caprani. Why, I saw him only a month ago."

"Yes," said Jenny, eagerly, "how pale she turned when Mr. Russell's eye fell upon her—how she shrank under his gaze! It was only a hint, and yet she—Ah!" added she, beating her hands together with a sort of impatience, "*you* talk of *my* fighting a battle, but I have no arms—I, a poor woman, have not been trained so skilfully to use those delicate weapons! *You* can do more in a second with a look, a word, a motion, than poor, stupid, helpless, clumsy *me* in a life! Ah! there are the dear children at last—at last!" And Miss Bell, in a sort of confusion, fled away to join her friends.

The two gentlemen looked after her, one with surprising sympathy and interest.

"There!" he said. "What did I tell you? Acting! Ah, that was not like acting!"

"Shall we say it was good acting, at all events?" answered the other. "No matter; we shall concede that she has 'pluck' and spirit, and stood up to the other woman

well. It amused me, really. And, to encourage her, and as our dear children have set their hearts on it, I'll try and arrange that about the ticket for her—for *you*, that is."

"My dear boy," said the other, with grateful eyes, "this is really good, and I assure you a Samaritan act."

"Oh, that of course," said the other, impatiently. "Only one thing I stipulate—I am not to be brought into the business. No thanks, gratitude, and that kind of thing—In fact, don't tell her—it's a whim of mine." And Mr. Russell went away, having seen some "men" in the distance whom he knew.

Then came the music through the trees—the sitting in the open air at the tables—the twinkling of the stray lights—inexpressible hush and tranquillity, and the softened voices that sound like chinking of silver—the happiest and most successful realisation of the "*dolce far*."

This had all set in again, with a stream tending towards the glowing furnace openings, where was the old absorbing excitement. There, again, was the old gather-

ing and the old devotees, who could not keep away; and there, on the outskirts of the crowd, was the red contorted face of Mr. Monkhouse, talking savagely to Colonel Oliphant, newly arrived, confounding the whole institution as belonging to a "d—d gang of swindlers, that at home, sir, would be kicked off any race-ground in the kingdom! When I get back I'll expose 'em in the House—I'll be d—d if I won't! I'll bring 'em before Parliament! Set of scheming scoundrels!" &c.

Jenny and one of her dear young friends, whose arm was fondled under her cape, passed to and fro with Mr. Lepell, looking on with the usual mixture of dread, pleasure, and curiosity. They sat down together—made a little encampment. Mr. Lepell gathered chairs together for them.

"No," said Jenny, sadly, "no, dears. I have made a bad impression. He will never be a friend. He dislikes me this moment, and will dislike me more every hour. I had an instinct of it; it came on me like a cold chill."

"But it is a delusion, dearest Jenny," said

Lucy, taking her arm in hers; "you mustn't think these things—I shall teach him to like you—was there ever such an idea, papa?"

"Mr. Lepell can't deny it—and won't deny it. He is too conscientious. No—Mr. Russell has formed his own idea. He is in the habit of judging character, and there is some unfortunate look about me. Of course," she added, more excitedly, "I have no one with me. No *protector*, as they call it. But is that *my* fault? But what am I talking of? Dear friends all—and I seem so ungrateful instead of being deeply, deeply thankful—you indeed are all to me, and when I go out again into coldness and solitude, which must be *very* soon——"

"Nonsense, nonsense, dear," said one of the girls, smiling; "not sooner than months, papa?"

"We shall see all about that by-and-by," said he, smiling; "but as to Russell, I *think* you are wrong, for I *know* he was pleased with the way you met that cruel Mrs. Long."

Jenny shook her head. "How nice of

you—how kind to say so—even a little encouragement cheers one! But still—still,” Jenny went on shaking her head sadly, “there is an instinct that never deceives. Never. I have some of it myself—a little, that is. *He does not like my being with you.*”

“Oh, Jenny!”

“No,” Jenny went on, quickly. “No. He is so wise, so careful, so anxious about you all, that I feel, as well as if I were going to die this moment, that he will try—as a duty, you know, and it does credit to him, and I admire him for it all the time—gradually to wean you all from me. I feel this as surely as if—as if—it was the rising of the sun to-morrow. He has mind and intellect, and is so clever—that he can do what he will—carry out what he will. And why not? A man of the world, what can he think of me? He only thinks of you who are dear to him. But, but,” and her voice faltered here and became low, “I must only begin again. God help poor me.”

The tears were in her eyes. The two

girls each caught a hand—on round full hands, and pressed almost the sympathy of anguish. . eyes rested on her with deep inte

“You must *not* take these gloo he said, his voice taking the k tenderest key. “Get all these of your head; we shall help you not, darlings?”

“*Indeed*, yes, papa,” they said “and as for that dreadful mar leave him to us.”

“I should leave him to you said he, “for when he comes to well, depend upon it he will es like you as we do. *I* have no fea

“*Indeed*, no, pa,” said Lucy; “so noble and generous, he is sure to Or if, by any *little* chance, he shoul how I shall beg and pray of his sake—and I am *sure* he will do it

Whatever trials and little mort Jenny Bell had passed through this sympathy of a kind and aff family was compensation enough might be seen in her looks; and f



moments she did not speak; indeed, none of the party spoke.

Presently they were wondering what had become of Mr. Russell. But he did not come back to them. He had gone off to billiards, or was smoking with other men. The night drew on to its end, and they set off to their hotel. As they entered under the arch, Russell came up.

"Good night," he said, gaily. "I have been kept away, playing truant shamefully, but doing business all the time."

"I know," said Mr. Lepell, significantly and joyfully almost. "I can guess, at least. He then drew him aside. *Give me the ticket*—you are a good, kind fellow, Charles—or give it to her yourself. She is in dreadful low spirits, and it will cheer her up, going to bed."

"All in good time," said Russell, quietly. And going back to them, he bade them good night again, then took Mr. Lepell by the arm, and said, "I want to speak to you. Come over here into the arbour walks."

"I was just going to propose it," said the other; "I have so much to say to you

about that poor girl, I could tell you her whole history."

"I *have* heard it," said Russell, stopping short, "and a very strange history it is. I have had the whole thing from the beginning. As to ticket, or that sort of thing, it is out of the question; and as to further acquaintance with this paragon, Miss Bell, my dear father to be, I pronounce it wholly out of the question. She is a mere adventuress."

"This is the old story, Charles," said Mr. Lepell, in a voice that trembled a little. "You said that before you had spoken to her."

"That was my instinct — and it was right. But, seriously, Mrs. Long has told the whole business of the Welsh place. My dear, good father, you are most amiable, and I respect and like your sympathy for the lonely and unfortunate, but it is thrown away in the present instance. The whole thing fits quite together. I know the complexion of such matters, and I say, emphatically and seriously, that it is a duty to our dear girls, who are so

gentle and lovable, to separate them at once from such a companion."

"Good God!" said Mr. Lepell, putting his hands up to his face. "What a world we live in! Tell me you have all this from Mrs. Long?"

"Well—yes."

"Ah! I *thought* so," said Mr. Lepell, triumphantly. "What did you say of her yourself, Charles—that about Florence? Is *she* a person to be casting stones at the weak and defenceless? He or she that is without sin, you know! Oh, Charles, this looks very base and cruel."

"Surely you know it yourself, sir," said Russell, impatiently. "Weren't you at the Welsh hotel? You saw it all. Really it surprises me a little. It is notorious that this 'picking up' of people at these places is never right. We can't be too cautious. Tell me one thing. She has borrowed money from you? Come!"

"Not a franc—not a sixpence—not a sou," answered Mr. Lepell, triumphantly. "There, Charles! as I live, no! She is above that."

"Is she?" said Russell. "What was that about the young fellow, though? I forget his name."

"I don't know," said the other, in agitation. "If we were to track all the idle stories—I don't think it fair. I don't think it honest. I don't, indeed. I *can't* give into you in this—I can't, indeed, Charles. I may not be up to the present tone of the world, and I have lived out of it long enough to have got behind; but still I can't give in to this. The poor girl herself had an instinct that all this was coming on her. I give you my honour she had. She thought that you were come to be her enemy. She said she saw it in your looks. She did, indeed."

"Oh, that might very well be," he answered, coldly. "I don't care to conceal my feelings, except when I have a reason. But now listen to me, my dear father to be. I admire all this in you. I do, indeed. It is generous, and noble, and does you infinite credit. Still, I know that I am right. Will you do this if I bring you proof—if

I lay my mind to the unmasking of this lady, and show you what she is—as clear as is the light of day—will you believe me then?”

“Ah! my dear Charles,” said Mr. Lepell, taking his hand joyfully, “certainly. That is sensible. Perhaps, indeed, I am a little quixotic, and trust too much. But you know where the poor children—those darlings that I love as the apple of my eyes—find a friend that they like, what would you have me do? Besides—really—common honour and justice, you know. I really know of nothing against Miss Bell.”

“Very well,” said Russell, rising. “I will do everything, and trust only to time. It will amuse me in this place.”

“With all my heart,” said Mr. Lepell, smiling. “She will come out of the trial as pure, as pure——”

“As any of the ladies in this place. Very well! Midnight! Good gracious! how time gets on. Let us go in.”

They rose.

“There is some one later than we are. A gambling lady.” And a lady in white tripped up the steps in a second.

“Poor soul!” said Mr. Russell, still at his cigar, “I dare say she is taking home a void in her heart as well as in pocket. She will lie down sore and aching. Who do you think she was?”

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

A GAME AT BILLIARDS.

AT the watering-place was a sort of Cercle, or Club, a sham thing, as all foreign clubs are (we should have heard Mr. Monkhouse dilating with bitter contempt on the "Brummagem" character of such things), which had a languid, halting, unhealthy life, and a rickety existence. In some years, it went out altogether—exhausted for want of funds; and on one occasion it was said that the property—billiard-table, &c.—had to be sold to meet arrears of rent. On the following season there would be an unusual influx of visitors. Young English, full of money and spirits, would ask noisily after the defunct institu-

tion, and it would be called back into spasmodic life.

The billiard-table reappeared, and some mouldy English newspapers were strewn about the place, as in the old flourishing days.

Of this night Mr. Russell went up there. He did not belong to it officially. But, as one of his friends said, "They will be too glad to get hold of a decent man on any terms." The place was very full. The French racing men who had come that evening and on the day before, were playing with their coats off, showing white waistcoats of the Jack Sheppard pattern, and made like ladies' spencers. The air was charged with racing epithets in damaged French and English: and very low English of that guild, with anointed hair and red faces, were being treated as oracles. But here, bent down over the green table, was the figure of a heavy ponderous Frenchman, with a white flabby face, with his cue presented like a lance. The shaded lamps played on his face, and showed what might be called the "Tenor" simper and moustaches. The strokes of this gentleman were

regarded with great reverence; and Russell, who knew nearly all the world, said to a friend as he entered, "Why, there's La Roux, the great racing Frenchman."

It was indeed the Corypheus of the French Turf, the owner of "Bilboquet" and "Madame Lafarge," who had won the Prix de Paris over and over again, and some small stakes at Newmarket. He was not unlike the late M. Jullien, and his movements were regarded with surprising reverence by a band of smaller Frenchmen.

For the English Turf he (and they) had a sort of fetish and slavish worship. For the rest of the nation they had the true national contempt. He was playing with a young English officer, and playing with great skill, and a band of smaller horse gentlemen, who acted as jackals to the great racing lion, applauded his strokes, and were almost open in their sneers at any success of his opponent.

"I am glad you have come in," said the officer to the new arrivals. "I feel uncomfortable among these gentry. Keep an eye on the gentleman who is marking, will you?"

Among the aides-de-camp and backers of

the great racing count was a heavy cognac-faced man, in a snuff-coloured velvet coat, and a crimson neckcloth. Among them, also, was a quiet, composed, tranquil young man, with yellow English whiskers and no moustache, who wore high "gills" and not a "turn-down" collar, and had a wise, gentlemanly, and reflective air, that contrasted a good deal with the rest. The first of these was Baron Glück, who kept many horses, and who had had a few minor successes; the latter was the Vicomte Merlin Talleyrand (a *soi-disant* branch of that famous family, but distinctly repudiated by the noble family), who for all his calmness and indifference, had the delightful reputation of having done things of a splendid wildness and extravagance, to which his natural calmness and almost gentleness gave a certain piquancy. He had "run off" with the Spanish Ambassador's wife; he had shot an officer dead at Versailles, and had been tried; he had won a hundred thousand francs at Homburg in a night. The ladies called him "beau garçon;" had him pointed out to them; and before many soft and gentle eyes were placed the co-

quettish double glasses, to get a better view of the hero. The men said he had the "diable au corps."

Count la Roux was carrying on his game triumphantly. The Frenchmen who surrounded him were insolent in their applause.

"I have more money than I like on this," said the young officer. "And, someday, I miss every stroke. There, again! Confound it."

"Not so bad," said the count. "You should be a professor, my friend, and give lessons. Now, Jules, watch me cannon—very good. Now for a pocket—very good too. Now for a brilliant stroke round the board. Eh! Jules! or straight off the cushion, what do you say?"

"He'll finish me with this," said the young officer; "and, hang it, it's the victory I grudge them."

"Courage," said Russell; "keep cool." The Frenchman had now made up his mind about his stroke, and was stooping over the board.

"He'll not do it," added Russell, in a low voice. "I can see he won't."

The count heard him, though he was not

intended to hear, and though it was spoken in a half-whisper. He stopped, drew back, and looked at Russell from foot to head, with a strange air of inquiry and insolence. Russell kept his eyes fixed on the balls. Then the count played. His ball went spinning round, but failed to carry out what he had planned.

"I told you so," said Russell, in a lower voice; "now let us try again. The best thing is this. Let us see, now—yes." And he directed him. The young Englishman played, carried out what he had intended, and Providence beside, threw in a happy "fluke."

"Good again," said Russell.

"I know I can play better than him," said the young man. "Only those fellows put me out."

"Steady, now," said the friendly Russell, "and you will do very well."

The Frenchmen were now whispering together, and smiling rather insolently. The young man made another happy stroke, got all the balls well together, and "went ahead," as he said. "I am getting into the swing of it now," he said.

"Well done," said a voice from the other end of the room. Mr. Tulloch had come in, and was applauding the last stroke.

The racing count came up slowly to Russell, leaning on his cue, as a London footman would on his cane, and still looking at him from his feet upwards.

"You are great assistance to your friend," he said. "It seems I have the honour of playing you, too?"

"No," said Russell, quietly. "As you know very well, no advice can give a good eye, or help to make a skilful stroke."

"At any rate, I like to play one person, not two. I'll run my Bilboquet against all your English horses—at your Derbi or anywhere—but that's a different thing."

The quiet hero, the *soi-disant* Talleyrand, came up gently. "I dare say," he said, "the gentleman would play better by himself, instead of merely acting as an administration, or a bureau."

"Poof! we never *can* get hold of the Administration, you know," said the count in the snuff-coloured velvet. "They never show themselves, but put forward some deputy. Ha! ha!"

"Would you play me," said Russell, calmly, to the great racing count, "after you have finished with this gentleman?"

The count made him a low bow. "I only think it worth while to play for the largest stakes, just as I run my horses for the largest stakes." Russell nodded carelessly. The game the young Englishman "pulled up" a good deal; but the count put out his strength, and after a sharp struggle, won.

The Frenchmen all applauded noisily and sarcastically.

"Vive Bilboquet!" cried one. "The colours of the count are always in the front. Vivent orange et brown."

Russell was taking off his coat. Mr. Tulloch shook his red silk handkerchief over at him.

"Vive this sort of thing," he said. "For Heaven's sake!" he cried, coming up to Russell, "give these mounseers a lesson. They are quite losing their heads, and Waterloo goes for nothing."

They were rubbing their hands. The racing count was chalking the top of his cue.

"I am only a child at this sort of thing," said the young officer. "You will find it a

different matter to deal with him. He was the best hand at the Vienna Cercle. So I give you fair warning. There is your money."

They began to play. The French count "led off" with ardour, "got hold" of the balls, made stroke after stroke, looking at his adversary after each with a sort of contemptuous defiance, as who should say, "What do you think of *that*?" A Frenchman and an admirer scored enthusiastically. Baron Glück, chewing rather than smoking a cigar, and with his hands firmly in his pockets, rose and fell upon his heels, and looked at the English with a steady stare of amusement. The count's was really "beautiful play," and he had scored fifteen without a break. Then Mr. Russell came on. "Don't be discouraged," he said to his friends, "if I make little at first. I always pull up at the end." And Mr. Russell made a plain rudimentary stroke that a school-boy would not have missed, tried again and missed.

The Frenchman bent down again with his "Mon Dieu!" He said: "You English are determined to fill our pockets, whether we will or no. Horses or games, it seems

all the same." Baron Glück still chewed his cigar, and kept his fixed inquiring smile turned towards the English.

"I am afraid I am not in good vein to-day," said Mr. Russell, modestly.

And the racing count ran on ahead, finishing with twenty-seven.

(The French gentlemen, as they wore "tweeds" and grooms' neckerchiefs all "*à l'Anglaise*," so they played the game of billiards in the English way.)

"Positively I shall be beaten disgracefully," said Russell, "if I don't do something."

"By Jove! yes," said the young Englishman. "For God's sake make a fight for it. If he gets in again he will run on to fifty without a break."

The three balls were almost in a line, at least in a very faint curve, and some feet from each other.

"Too 'fine,' " whispered the young fellow. "Can't be done. Have a good safe pocket there on the right, and a cannon afterwards."

Mr. Russell, however, had taken his aim. There was the faintest touch, the ball glided

on, grazed the side of the count's gently, and, with no sound, stirred it, and floated on languidly to the red ball, farther on, which it had just strength to reach, and salute in the same *vieille cour* and respectful fashion. The young Englishman's leg went up into the air—that strange spasm with which men at this game follow a doubtful stroke; and the Frenchmen drew a heavy sigh. “By Jove!” he said, looking at the table, “I didn't think I could have done that at this stage. It *was* fine, certainly. I am getting more into the thing.”

He was, certainly. For suddenly he began to work with extraordinary vivacity and impetuosity. Now his enemy's ball was about two feet in front of a pocket, exactly in a right line with his own. He might have gone into a comfortable pocket “off” the other in the regular way; but of a sudden would come a savage stroke full and strong at the back of his enemy, who would go with a plunge into the pocket, which he tried to burst through, which somehow conveyed to the company an ignominious and degrading treatment. Another time, the ball flew from before his

cue, and the Frenchmen heard "click, click," all round the table. In short, before he stopped he had run to thirty-one to the French count's twenty-seven.

The latter had grown very savage, even from the waiting. At every successful stroke he turned away impatiently to his friends. He used the word "fliouke."

"Quite right!" cried Russell, good humouredly. "There never was such a series of discreditable ones. I don't know what is over me to-day."

They played on. He was forty-five, the count forty-seven. It was very late. So there was to be but one game. It was growing exciting. It was Russell's turn. "I shall miss now, as of course; I know I shall." His ball was under the cushion, miserably squeezed in. The other two were afar off, almost touching each other, and in a hopeless position for cannon. Off shot Russell's with speed. There was a sort of joint click, compounded of several.

"I declare," said the young Englishman, "wonderful—a marvellous cannon!"

The Frenchman came down furiously, carrying his cue as if it were a halberd.

"No, no!" he said; "that was no stroke."

The other Frenchmen closed in behind.

"No, no!" they called out, excitedly. "Ten thousand sacrés, no!"

"But we saw it," said the young Englishman. "I was close up; you were at the other end."

"I'll not give it up," said the Frenchman, excitedly. "You are not umpires. We have a voice as well as you. You are not to have it all your way, are you?"

"I saw it too," said Mr. Tulloch, "as plain as these grey Scotch eyes have ever seen anything. It was a cannon as plain as any pikestaff that ever was in this world."

"I shall not give it up," said the French count. "You may do as you please. When gentlemen come to play together they should——"

"Now, now," said Russell, "will no one listen to me? Haven't I a voice? Do you know, I begin to think monsieur may be right? It may not have been a stroke—the thing was so confused."

"What do you mean?" whispered the young Englishman. "Do you want to give him the game?"

"I don't understand this sort of way," said the Frenchman, grumbling and fuming; "claiming strokes and then giving them up."

"I never claimed, do me that justice," said Russell, laughing; "but I certainly give up, if there is anything to give up."

Still grumbling, and without acknowledging this concession, the French count bent to play. The other Frenchmen looked ferociously at the other English. Putting as much venom as he could into the end of his cue, he tried to shoot Russell vindictively into the right-hand pocket.

"It's all over with me. *Actum est*," said the latter, leaning resignedly on the end of his cue.

But no. It was a mysterious miss, from want of chalk, perhaps from over-eagerness. This was one more for Russell. The balls lay in a disposition absurdly easy. The Frenchman stamped away, swearing audibly, and beat the ground with his cue. When he looked round the game was Russell's. "It has surprised myself," he said.

But the anger of the defeated party passed all bounds. "I could beat you

easily, if I chose," said the count, dragging on his coat, "just as if you were a child. How can I play with men that claim strokes they have not made? You did that on purpose, I do believe."

"I am sure you could beat me," said Russell, getting his hat, "if you put out your strength, and if we had a quiet game. Your friends here, who are naturally anxious for you to win, are a little confusing, perhaps."

"I did not care to play to-night," he continued, more excitedly. "I could beat you, or any other Englishman. Eh, Glück?"

"I believe you," observed that gentleman; "because a man's arm is a little unsteady with cognac and champagne—I say you will beat any Englishman, just as Bilboquet or Madame Lafarge will beat anything of their crick-crack horses yet. Hourra!"

"Hourra!" said the other Frenchmen, derisively.

"There is the dam money," said the count, throwing it down on the table. "It is *his*," he said, pointing to the young Englishman; "so I only pass it on to you."

The others laughed. Russell laughed too.

"Very good," he said. "Capital! But sometimes I play very badly, and sometimes I actually surprise myself. This is one of the days on which I surprised myself."

"That is the way with you English," said the count, insolently, and pulling on his gloves. "You crow so over every little success!"

"That is the character of our country," answered Russell, still in good humour. "John Bull is apt to be a little elated. The French are much more philosophic."

"Ha—ha!" said the count (they were all near the door now); "wonderful victory, Begod!—a little game at billiards. I congratulate you from my soul!"

"Ha—ha!" laughed the other Frenchmen.

"Good night, gentlemen," said Russell. "Ha—ha! I must say you take your beating in the most good-humoured way I ever saw. Good night."

END OF VOL. II.

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